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# Saint Paul on Christian Unity



SAINT PAUL  
ON  
CHRISTIAN UNITY

An Exposition of the Epistle  
to the Ephesians

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*To my wife, Lilian Smallman Cowden, to whom I am happily united in marriage, to which conjugal union Paul compares the mysterious union of Christ and His Church, for the unity of which this book is written and sent forth.*



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# INTRODUCTION



## I

### THE CALL TO-DAY FOR UNITY

**T**HE world is entering upon a new era. We are face-to-face with world tasks and problems that call for the united action of all Christian nations and churches. All the old conditions of life, which have been with us from the beginning, and many new conditions that arise out of the life of to-day call us to unity that we may save the world and ourselves. Through the many rapid modern means of communication and transportation the world to-day has been brought close together, and is being made one as never before. As God formerly "made of *one* every nation of men to dwell on the face of the earth," He is to-day bringing these nations back together and making them one by bringing them into close touch and contact with each other through the telegraph, the telephone, air-messages, the rapid trains and steamships, automobiles and aeroplanes, etc. National seclusion is, therefore, a thing of the past. The time has come when no nation nor person "liveth unto himself." Every nation has awakened to find itself in daily contact with every other nation of the earth, and each individual has thereby been brought into conscious touch with all the people of the world. The world and the people thereon are materially one to-day as never before; and this physical unity calls for a corresponding spiritual unity in both state and church.

Accordingly, men in all the relationships and interests of life are awakening to this need of unity. Business men are to-day thinking and planning in world terms

for their business. They are buying from and selling to the world; and no man that does not take the world into his business can succeed to-day. All the professions to-day are operating in and for the world instead of a local community as of old. The lawyer deals with the world to-day, and therefore needs a knowledge of international law as never before. The doctor to-day has access to the medical and surgical clinics of the world, and dares not practice his profession without a knowledge of the same. The teacher goes to a world school, and has access to all the knowledge of the world that he may be prepared to teach the youth of this new world. In fact, all are fast becoming cosmopolitans.

The Christian has been a cosmopolitan from the beginning. On the day of Pentecost, the beginning of the Christian era, "there were gathered together devout *men from every nation under heaven*," and of this cosmopolitan multitude the first Christians were made. These people came to Jerusalem seclusive nationalists, but went away altruistic cosmopolitans. They were made to see the world and its needs, and were sent away with this world commission in their hearts, namely, "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." The task of this commission called for the united effort of all disciples, and all responded to the call; and through this unity of action on the part of the first Christians the Gospel was preached to the whole world by the Apostolic church. Thus through unity the early church, in spite of the many crushing, withering persecutions that came upon it, grew rapidly, and spread throughout the known world. But during the fourth century the church was greatly hindered by the contention and conflict over the question of church government, and finally divided into

two parties, the Episcopal and the Presbyterian, and has continued to divide from that day to this over matters of more or less importance, until to-day there are more than two hundred distinct religious bodies in Christendom. But the time has come for the gathering together and restoring of all these divided parts of the Church into the original body of Christ. This is the call of God to-day to all Christians in all the churches.

It is useless to review these divisions in the church with the purpose of determining the blame and responsibility for the same; even the apologists for division have been unable to clear entirely the skirts of their respective parties, so there must be blame on all sides; at any rate the task of the church to-day is not to censure but to restore; and to this end this book is directed and dedicated.

Accordingly, we pass by the history of the divisions without even mentioning them, and return at once to the original body of Christ as revealed in the New Testament that we may the better hear and heed the call for unity to-day. We find that even the Apostolic church was threatened with division, as is evident from these words of the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Cloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this, I mean, that each one of you sayeth, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?” I Cor. I:10-13.

The above is Paul's call to the church of his day for unity, warning them against division. You will note from the absurd questions that he asks that he bases his

appeal for unity upon the absurdity of divisions. Division in the church is indeed absurd, irrational, if not insane. The keeper of an insane asylum on being asked, "Are you not afraid that these insane people will unite some time, and hurt you and the other attendants?", replied, "No. Crazy people never unite on anything." We can unite on everything except religion, but on this we have acted as insane people according to Paul. Paul furthermore shows that division is sinful, declaring it to be "carnal," and classes it with such unspeakable sins of the flesh as "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." We need to see the exceeding sinfulness of divisions, because in this conviction there is a strong appeal for unity. But,

"Vice is a monster of such frightful mien  
As to be hated needs but to be seen;  
But seen too oft, familiar with his face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Division has been with us so long; and we have become so accustomed to the same, that it is hard for us to realize the sinfulness of it. In fact, some have reached the stage of embracing it and declaring it to be of God; but God is not the author of sin. Division is "a work of the flesh," says Paul, through which Satan operates to defeat the cause of God in the earth; and it is Satan's strongest ally in weakening and defeating the church. So then, the call for unity in the church is virtually the call of God against Satan in the world.

Furthermore, God calls us to unity not only through the teachings of the Holy Scripture, as shown above, but

through many modern conditions that speak to us like "burning bushes" along our pathway, calling us to unity and warning us against division. In the first place, there is the high cost and stupendous waste of division that urges unity. After our riot of spending and wasting during the war economy is the watchword to-day; and the unity of the church offers the greatest field for economy. In almost every small community there are from five to seven churches, where there should be only one; and by unity the saving in buildings, money and men would evangelize the world for Christ in a short time. Estimate this saving in one community, and then multiply it by the vast number of such communities, and you have one of the greatest problems in economy of which the mind can conceive.

Also the world's great need and the great tasks growing out of these needs call for unity. The world was never in greater need than to-day, in need of food and clothing, made destitute by the world war, and in need of the Gospel, the greatest need of all, out of which have sprung all of its other needs. In view of the greatness and the urgency of the world's need to-day, and the greatness of the task to supply this need, the church must unite, or fail in its mission to the world. The supplying of the world's temporal and spiritual needs to-day is too big a task for a divided church, just as it was too big a task during the great world war. When that great, world-wide conflagration of suffering and death broke out in the world, men and women turned to the church, saying: "Where is the church? Can not the church prevent this awful war?" And some began to ask: "Has the church failed?" Yes, the church did fail—failed because of its division. A united church could doubtless have prevented this war. Furthermore, as the war progressed,

with its awful suffering and untold deaths, suffering and dying humanity again turned to the church, saying: "Can't you feed us? Can't you bind up our wounds? Can't you pour in the oil of consolation and salvation in the hour of our death?" And again, on account of division, the church had to sit helpless and unable to respond to this world call, while such institutions as the Y. M. C. A., the Red Cross, the Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army, etc., did this work that the church of Christ was organized to do. If tears were ever shed in heaven, undoubtedly they were shed then, when Jesus Christ looked down upon this starving, bleeding, dying world crying for help, and His church, weakened and incapacitated through division, unable to respond to these needs. But you say: "The above institutions that did this work are Christian institutions." That is true; but they are not the church, and the church as an institution had to sit idly by, while the world suffered and died, because it was too big a task for a divided church. While the war has passed, the need for a united church is no less now than during the war, because the church to-day is confronted by other world tasks and problems that are too big for a divided church. The war brought the nations of the earth together in a common cause, and bound their welfare and destiny together in such a way that the world to-day is one, and the tasks and problems that confront us to-day are world problems and tasks. National seclusiveness is a thing of the past. Nothing short of a united League of Nations can meet and solve the governmental problems and tasks of the future, and nothing short of a united church can meet and solve the religious problems and tasks of the future.

Another condition that calls all Christians to unity to-day is the prevalence of sin and the dominance of

Satan in modern life. We are not living in the wickedest age in the history of the world, not so wicked as the Apostolic age (see Rom. 1-2); yet sin is still with us, and Satan still commands the mighty "spiritual hosts of wickedness." In fact, some sins seem to be on the increase. Greed, selfishness, is rampant in the world to-day. A more grasping, profiteering, avaricious people never lived in the world. No people ever had more or wanted more, and all of it hoarded for and spent upon self. We are fast becoming Babylonians of the most profligate type. Also we are headed toward Sodom. The social sins are shockingly and alarmingly prevalent in modern life. Lust like a consuming flame is burning out both the physical and spiritual vitals of the race to-day. Other sins also are eating out the body and soul of men and women; and Satan is still enthroned in high places, leading a deluded, sin-laden people to death and destruction. And the only way to check this wave of sin and put sin out of modern life is to unite all Christian forces against the same. The saloon was put out thus, and so can every other sinful agency and enemy of righteousness. Unless the Christian people unite, and take their stand against sin and Satan, modern social life is doomed. The call to unity is therefore the call of righteousness that every lover of righteousness must hear and heed.

Again, the safety of our homes and country call us to unity. We are beset with perils upon every hand. Red revolution is abroad in the land, undermining and destroying all that we hold dear. The people of the United States have been rocked so long in the cradle of liberty and safety that we did not realize before the war that dangers are possible; but we awoke to find that we had been nursing in our very bosom the unspeakable Trotzky.

This led to an American roll-call, which showed that we had over eleven millions of people in this country that could not speak the English language, nor cared nothing for American ideals and standards. These revolutionary propagandists are still working for the destruction of modern civilization; and the safety of our homes and country call all that cherish the ideals of church and state to unite against them. The sacred hearthstone and the precious flag call us to unite in their defense.

Furthermore, a losing, decreasing church calls us to unity. In recent years every church has lost ground. While there has been a partial recovery during the last two years, there is still a large shortage of members and congregations and an alarming shortage of ministers. The *Literary Digest*, after investigation, recently stated that there would be a shortage of ten thousand ministers in the Protestant churches next year with no students in the colleges to take the places. One has only to go into the country and small towns to see numberless examples of dying churches, dying because of divisions, for, if the churches of the community were united, the church could be supported, and would grow and prosper. The rural churches will have either to unite or quit. So, therefore, the call to unity in many places is the call of life or death for the church.

Lastly, the Lord's unanswered prayer for the unity of all His disciples calls us into the unity of Himself and the Father; and surely no one can be indifferent to this prayer. John 17:20-21. A mother, who wished to reclaim her fallen daughter, and had tried every means with no effect, finally decided on this: She had her photograph made, with these words underneath, "Mother is praying that you will come home," and had them placed in places where the girl would likely see one;

and she did, and came home. The mother's prayer was the only influence able to bring her back. Likewise, no doubt the only strong influence that will ever bring the followers of Jesus Christ together, and keep them together, is the prayer of our Lord for our unity. The fact that He is praying for our unity ought to soften the hearts of the most alienated, and bring all together. Surely, no one can be indifferent to His prayer for our unity.

In conclusion, when we consider the many pressing conditions to-day that call for the unity of all God's people, the problem of unity can not be put aside or shelved, but demands a solution at the hands of the Christians of this generation. At the last National Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Atlanta the Commission on Unity with the Northern Methodist reported that they were unable to unite. The Conference appointed the same committee, and sent them back with this instruction, "*You must unite,*" and in doing so they sounded the keynote of this age, "*We must unite.*" Whatever obstacles are in the way they must be removed, that the children of God the world over may unite hands and hearts for God and righteousness, for Christ and His church; and to this end this book is written and sent forth.

## II

### IS CHRISTIAN UNITY POSSIBLE?

**T**HE question that is uppermost in the mind of the Church to-day is not, "Is Christian Unity Desirable?" but, "Is it Possible?" All have become convinced that it is desirable, "a consummation devoutly to be wished," if possible. The churches have at last realized the evils of division, and are seeking the way to unity. The denominations, which a few years ago were the pride and glory of Christians, have few apologists to-day, while many eloquent tongues and pens in every denomination are pleading for unity with all God's people, and the whole church seems to be possessed with a passion to return to "the one flock and one shepherd." This widespread desire for unity has found its way even into the seclusive and exclusive Roman Church, which for centuries has dwelt behind its high "walls of partition;" but to-day there has arisen the Modernist Movement in the Catholic Church, that seems to be trying to find its way into the great common fold of Christ. Of this movement Abbe Houtin says: "O sons and heritors of the Reformers of the sixteenth century, you see beginning in the Church of Rome, which condemned your fathers without listening to them—you see beginning a religious struggle more far-reaching than that of Luther and Calvin." The Roman Catholic scholar, Mehler, a Modernist, says: "Both communions [Protestant and Catholic] should stretch out a friendly hand to one another in the consciousness of a common guilt. This open confession

of guilt on both sides will be followed by the festival of reconciliation." On the other hand, the advocates of Christian unity in the Protestant churches are too numerous to quote or mention. The desire for Christian unity is so far spread to-day that it is hardly worth while to spend time in showing that unity is the desirable thing. This has been the chief objective of the preaching and writing on Christian unity in the past; but this is very largely, if not altogether, conceded to-day. Whatever was lacking to convince all of the desirableness of Christian unity has been supplied by the great World War, which clearly demonstrated both the weakness and sinfulness of divisions, and the strength and efficiency of unity. This almost unanimous desire for unity is the first pre-essential to Christian unity, because the desire is the father of the deed. Only people that greatly desire to unite can unite.

While the desire to unite is the first essential step toward unity, it takes more than the desire to unite people. "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride," is true in all the relationships of life. In all things that we undertake to do, being human, we have to reckon with the possible and the impossible; and with respect to the attempt to unite the religious world many look upon it as impossible, a hopeless undertaking. There is no denial of the fact that it is a great undertaking, so great in fact that it seems to be beyond human power. It involves great and difficult problems, and presents impassable barriers and obstacles. Any one that does not see these great difficulties is a blind optimist. Every one that has observed and thought over the divided state of Christendom realizes the greatness of the task to unite the church; but it is a mistake to look upon it as an impossible task. Christ prayed that His disciples might be one,

and He never prayed for impossibilities. He also stated that it shall be. "There shall be one flock and one shepherd." In fact, Christian unity existed in the early church for nearly four hundred years, so it is no religious Utopian dream, but a historical reality that continued in the Apostolic church for centuries, and is, therefore, a possibility in the church to-day.

Furthermore, Paul says, "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me." What people can do depends largely on the impelling motive behind the deed. With a sufficient motive, Christian unity is not only possible, but highly probable. The strongest motive power of which men and women are capable, says Paul, is love, which he sets forth as the only influence sufficient to effect and maintain Christian unity. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;  
We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul asks the question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?", and then answers it by affirming that absolutely nothing can break this tie in Christ. He mentions some of the greatest alienating causes, such as tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword, so, if none of these terrible experiences can alienate us from Christ, then there is nothing that

can. We, therefore, have a tie in Christ that binds in spite of all the alienating causes, and makes Christian unity possible.

Note, furthermore, that this tie not only binds, but it triumphs. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." We are victorious in spite of all difficulties that may arise in life or death, from principalities and powers in high places or low, or from any creature whatsoever. We, therefore, have a tie in Christ Jesus our Lord that binds and triumphs in spite of all the alienating causes and defeating difficulties that beset the pilgrimage of Christian life.

Love is the only motive power that can bind and triumph over all opposition in this life. There are other motive powers that can bind and triumph for awhile. For instance, hatred, the opposite of love, can bind people together for awhile, and lead them to victory over some difficulties, as it did in the case of the enemies of Christ, who were bound together by a common hatred, and were led by the same to the victory of His death; but they did not remain together long, but soon parted, and the cause of Christ triumphed over them. Hope also is a strong motive power in one's life, and those that are led on by the bright star of hope accomplish great victories; but hope is not invincible. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick"—is easily discouraged and gives up the fight. Also, the human will is a great motive power, so great that there are few limitations on what those that say, "I can and will;" but even the human will is not invincible. Mr. Henley was mistaken when he said: "I thank God for my unconquerable soul." The human soul is not invincible. There are roads too rough and mountains too high to be traveled and scaled by the human will, and there are burdens too heavy to be borne by the

human will; such burdens as poor, frail, delicate women are carrying to-day—loads that would crush the will of the strongest man in the world. The only reason that any one can carry such a burden is that love is underneath the load. Love can carry any burden, and endure any hardship. In other words, love alone is invincible; and this is what Paul meant when he said: “We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

But has not Paul in his zeal overstated the power of love? Not so, when we take into consideration Paul's conception of love. Love, to Paul, is the vital central motive power that controls and regulates the whole social and spiritual world. Love is to the spiritual universe what the force of gravity is to the physical universe. When God created the universe, He created and set in operation the law of gravity that was to control and regulate everything in the universe; and through the operation of this great law of matter everything is held in position, and moves on in such perfect unison and harmony that, listening, you can almost hear the music of the spheres. However, there come times—times of storm—when it seems that the world is about to go to pieces; but you know that down beneath the storm is a mightier power than the storm, the power of gravity, which you can trust to hold the world together; and so it has been with all the storms that have assailed the earth. The storm in all its fury passed; and, with the exception of a rent here and a gash there, the old world was left the same. Just so there come storms in the social and spiritual world that threaten and disturb the safety and peace of the world for the time, and at times it looks as if everything is going to pieces. Especially was this the case in the last war, which was the greatest social storm that this world has ever seen; but we have seen

it pass, and the old world is left largely the same as it was. God is still at the center of things, and His love, a great attractive force, permeates the whole social universe, and holds things together, and will continue to do so even to the end. Wherefore Paul says, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us;" which is no exaggerated statement of the power of love, but the simple truth that underlies the whole social and spiritual world; and through this love as the motive power, and through it alone, Christians can and will unite.

Yes, they can unite, but will they? In view of their great differences and strong feelings, will they be willing to lay these aside and let love have its way? If they have the love of which Paul speaks above, they will, and it matters not how great the differences and how bitter the feelings. One illustration will suffice to show this. A husband and wife became alienated, and separated; a third party undertook to reunite them. He talked to the man first, and he thought that he never heard a man say uglier, meaner things about any woman than the husband said about his wife. He talked with the wife next and then he decided that the man had not said anything about his wife. Well, he concluded, of course, that it was useless to try further to get these people together. They were too far apart, and their feelings toward each other were too bitter and intense. But they were united, and how? They had a little child; and this little child came over to the father, and, taking him by the hand, led him over to the mother; and they fell on each other's necks, and wept, and were united again. They had a common love; they both loved that little child; and this common love brought them together and kept them together. Christians have a common love; they all love Jesus Christ; and Paul says that this tie binds in spite

of all alienating causes and difficulties. If Christians would only let Christ bring them together, where they could see the nail-prints in His hands and the sword-thrust in His side, they could, and would come together and unite. "Nothing," says Paul, "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Note, next, to what this tie unites us. In the first place, it unites us to God; and what a blessed thing it is to be united to God! In the second place, it unites us to each other. Paul says that nothing shall be able to separate "*us*," not *me*, from the love of God. The Christian tie is not an individual tie, but a fraternal tie. It is a tie that binds Christians together, and thus united they are united to God. No Christian can separate himself from his brethren, and claim an individual tie with God. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, can not love God whom he hath not seen." Love is the only influence in the world that can bring people together and keep them together. Love is the only tie that can keep a home together, and it is the only tie that can keep a church together. Many Christians have trusted a common faith to keep them together. They believed the same things, and they trusted this tie to keep them together in the bond of peace; but it failed. A common faith, however strong, can not maintain the bond of Christian brotherhood. Only a common love can do this. The strong heat of a fervent common love is the only influence that can melt and unite human hearts in a lasting bond of Christian unity; but this can, and will, unite all Christians that allow the love of God to have its way in their hearts and over their lives.

The Christian tie of love not only binds Christians together in spite of all alienating causes, but it also leads

Christians, thus bound together or united, to victory in spite of all the obstacles in the way,—“ We are more than conquerors through him that loved us,” says Paul. There is strength in unity, whatever may be the tie that binds together; but, when people are united by the bond of Christian love, Paul says they are invincible. According to Paul, love makes Christian unity possible; and Christian unity makes all things possible. When people are united in Christ through love, they can triumph over all difficulties and opposition. But was not Paul speaking of the problems and difficulties of his day? Yes. But our problems and difficulties in the church to-day are no greater than those of Paul’s day. It is true that the church to-day has some great problems to solve and some great tasks to perform,—some that have come down from preceding generations, unsolved and unperformed, the greatest of which is the problem of Christian unity. But Paul shows us that love makes unity possible; and unity enables Christians to accomplish all the tasks assigned to them by the Lord Jesus.

For this reason, John the Apostle of love, writes, “ Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God. \* \* \* Herein is love, not that we love God, but that God loved us, and sent the Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” There is enough in the above to melt the heart of every true Christian, and unite it with all other Christian hearts, and join his hands with all other Christian hands; and thus united win the victory for Christ and His church. When Christians are thus brought under the spell and influence of the Love of God, Christian unity and every other Christian problem and task are possible.

In this connection, the old hymn, "Blest Be the Tie," has added significance:

"Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne  
We pour our ardent pray'rs;  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear;  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear."

And then that other song, sung to the tune and words of "Loyalty to Christ," which expresses the rest of Paul's teaching on unity and victory through unity, as follows:

"From over hill and plain there comes the signal strain,  
'Tis unity, unity, unity in Christ;  
Its music rolls along, the hills take up the song  
Of unity, unity, yes, unity in Christ.

#### CHORUS

On to victory! On to victory! Cries our great Commander  
"On";  
We'll move at his command, we will soon possess the land,  
Thro' unity, unity, yes, unity in Christ.

O hear, ye brave, the sound that moves the earth around,  
'Tis unity, unity, yes, unity in Christ;  
Arise to dare and do, ring out the watchword true,  
Of unity, unity, yes, unity in Christ.

Come, join our loyal throng, we'll rout the giant wrong,  
'Tis unity, unity, yes, unity in Christ,  
Where Satan's banners float we'll send the bugle note,  
Of unity, unity, yes, unity in Christ.

The strength of youth we lay at Jesus' feet to-day,  
'Tis unity, unity, yes, unity in Christ;  
His Gospel we'll proclaim thro'out the world's domain,  
Through unity, unity, yes, unity in Christ."

To be sure, the only way that Christians will ever be able to defeat Satan and proclaim the Gospel throughout the world is by unity. This is why our Lord prayed that his disciples might be one, namely, "that the world may believe;" and the world is not going to believe until we are one; and he would not have prayed for our unity if it had not been possible. Let no one, therefore, draw back from this task and problem, believing it to be impossible, because Jesus says, "With God all things are possible;" and Paul says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? \* \* \* We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Accordingly, we have a tie in Christ that makes Christian unity possible, and Christian unity makes every Christian task possible.

### III

#### IS CHRISTIAN UNITY PRACTICABLE?

**I**F Christian unity is ever to be realized, it must be made more than possible; it must be made practicable. A practical way must be found. Love makes Christian unity possible by giving a sufficient motive for the realization of unity; in other words love gives the vision that can lead to unity; but that is all love can do. Love is the first essential to Christian unity; but it is not the only essential, as some seem to think. Accordingly, they teach that all you need to do is to get people to love each other, and they will unite; but love alone can not unite people. Love alone makes people visionary and sentimental, and consequently weak and ineffective. A practical way for the realization of love's vision must be found to accomplish anything worth while for Christian unity.

Paul gives the practical side of Christian unity in this statement: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but *faith working through love.*" Neither love alone nor faith alone can avail, or realize, but "faith working through love." Faith and love working together, this working combination, "avails," that is, can do things, can solve any Christian problem or perform any Christian task. The reason for this is evident. Love gives the vision that is essential to any great work, and faith leads into the practicable way, which is the other essential. Faith is practical in its very nature and leadings, because it is "the conviction of things not seen." It therefore rests upon evidence, and follows the course of reason, so must be

practical in its leadings. For this reason faith never goes off at a tangent like hope, or loses sight of the earth in its visions like love; but it supplements love by opening up a practical way for the realization of love's visions. For this reason faith and love working together "avails," or can do things. This is true in all the relationships of life, and especially "in Christ," as Paul states. We have considered in the preceding chapter the part that love performs in bringing about Christian unity, namely, it gives the motive or vision that makes Christian unity possible; and now we come to the consideration of faith, the yoke-fellow of love, which makes unity practicable; and through this working combination of faith and love we look for the solution of the problem of Christian unity.

Notice first what kind of faith "avails." It is a "working" faith, says Paul. A dormant faith, faith in the abstract, if there be such, can not avail. James says that "faith apart from works is dead," so, of course, can do nothing; but faith expressed by works, or a working faith is alive, and can do things. This is the faith that Paul says "avails," or can lead the way to unity. It is also faith that works along definite rational lines, and opens up a practicable way to unity. So, then, Christian unity on its practical side is more a unity of workers than worshippers, more a unity of hands than hearts, more a unity of minds than spirits. Many people think of Christian unity as abstract or subjective, and speak of it as the unity of faith and love, which is realized in the hearts and souls of the people that believe and love alike, so they call it the unity of kindred hearts and souls; but this is not the whole of Christian unity according to Paul. While Christian unity springs from hearts and souls that believe and love alike, it expresses itself in a unity of work, and

has no other practical meaning. Paul, in speaking of himself and Apollos, says, "We are God's fellow-workers," "workers together for God," "fellow-workers for and with God," or "We work together in God's service," as it is variously translated. This unity of work and workers is Christian unity; or, in other words, Christian unity is all Christians in a community working together for God. This is its only practical meaning.

However, people may work together, and still not be united. It is "faith working *through love*" that unites. While it is a working faith that directs and leads into unity, it is love that does the uniting. Love is the flame that melts the hearts, and cements the hands of all working together, without which there can be no real unity. Many Christians and churches often work together in the same community at the same task; but they work in competition and rivalry with no love in their hearts for each other, which separates rather than unites them. Rivalry and competition are the inevitable results of overlapping churches, which engenders strife and division; but all that have a common "faith working through love" will come together and unite in heart and hand for Christ and his church.

But what faith and whose faith will lead people to unite? This question has been the cause of many divisions in the church; and, unless we can settle definitely and agreeably this question, there can be no hope of unity. There have been many faiths, or rather many statements of faith; and upon each a sect has been founded, and these various creeds have been the cause of divisions in the church. Unless we can find our way out of this credal warfare into the peace of a common faith, we cannot unite, so we look for the settlement of this question. Faith is an essential to unity, and must be

definitely stated and clearly understood to have unity in the church. Any effort to unite without mentioning faith, as some are trying to do, is like staging Hamlet with Hamlet left out. Faith is the chief actor on the programme for Christian unity, leading the way into unity; so we must know definitely and clearly what or whose faith to follow.

Fortunately, Paul settles this question, as he does every other question that is an essential to unity. In his letter to the Ephesians he speaks of "the unity of *the* faith," showing that the faith that unites is a definite faith; and in his letter to the Romans he defines this faith, saying that it is "faith that comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Any faith, therefore, that comes from within a man, that he originates and formulates, or does not come from without by hearing is not Christian faith but personal faith, and can not be made the way to Christian unity. Furthermore, faith may come from without by hearing, and still not be Christian faith; it must come by "hearing the word of God." This brings us to the word of God for the source and statement of Christian faith. The source of this faith will be considered in this chapter, and the statement in a later chapter, Chapter II of Part Two.

The only sure and reliable source for the word of God is the Bible, "the Scriptures inspired of God." While some claim to have received the word of God from other sources, their credentials for the same are not convincing, so we are shut up to the word of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures for the faith that unites, which all Christians accept as a true revelation of God's word. Whatever later revelations any one may claim to have they cannot be made the basis of unity, because other people cannot be convinced of their authenticity; but for all that

believe the Christian canon to be the sacred Scriptures of God, there is ground for unity. However some people seem to think, that they are the only people in the world that really believe and teach the word of God as revealed in the Scriptures; and to show that this is not true the following statements from leaders in the various churches to-day are herein given. They show conclusively that they believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and are willing to come to them for the faith that unites.

“We must go back to essential New Testament principles, for their ancient program, re-emphasized in the largest way, is the conquering program of the future.”—*Rev. Oliver Huckel, D.D. (Congregationalist), Baltimore, Md.*

“The only solid basis of church union is the general abandonment of doctrines, traditions, theories and rites not found in the New Testament. So long as Christians cling to the traditions of the latest fathers, and refuse to go back to the plain teachings and simple ordinances of the New Testament, there will be irreconcilable divisions in the body of Christ. The true basis of the union of Christendom, for which so many to-day are longing, is a general return to primitive Christianity. It is not difficult to determine what that is, for it is writ large on the pages of the Book. Let us all cheerfully give up every dogma, every ceremonial, not found there, and Christian and church union will come of itself. Any attempt at union on a lower plane will prove a failure.”—*Examiner (Baptist).*

“All things are calling us just now to give ourselves and our church to primary things, and to keep out of the way all secondary things, however good and true, however much we prize them. It is time to rally to the defense of our common Christianity, and let our private, partisan and denominational peculiarities shift for themselves. If they die, so much gain for the kingdom of God.”—*Dr. Wm. P. Merrill (Presbyterian).*

“We, the representatives of the Presbyterian, the Methodist and the Congregational branches of the church of Christ in Canada, do hereby set forth the substance of the Christian faith as commonly held among us. In doing so we build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone,”—*From “The Published Basis of Union.”*

“There is a necessity of a return to first principles; we must get behind the prejudices, interests, errors and associations of history to the fountain-head of Christianity; we must sit at the feet

of the Master, and move again in the company of the apostles. We must become in temper and in spirit, and not merely in name and in claim, an apostolic church."—*Canon Hensley Henson* (Episcopalian).

"The church that we need is a church that stands for the simplicity and the sufficiency of the religion of Jesus Christ, calling itself by no name but one. The best men in all the churches are seeking to a common basis of union, to come together on some large Christian confession, and to live with one another as becomes disciples of Christ."—*Dr. John Hunter, of Trinity Church, Glasgow, Scotland.*

"We do hereby affirm that Christian unity, now so earnestly desired by the memorialists, can be restored only by the return of all Christian communions to the principles of unity exemplified by the undivided catholic church during the first ages of its existence, which principles we believe to be the substantial deposit of Christian faith and order committed by His apostles to the church unto the end of the world, and, therefore, incapable of compromise or surrender by those who have been ordained to be its stewards for the common and equal benefit of all men."—*The Bishops of the Episcopal Church to the Whole Church.*

"We want a Christianity more pure, more practical, more conformed to the original gospel."—*Catholic Modernist.*

This willingness on the part of all to follow the faith that comes by hearing the word of God as revealed in the Christian Scriptures is an important step toward unity; and furthermore Paul assures us that "the Scriptures inspired of God \* \* \* completely furnish the man of God unto every good work." 2 Tim. 3:16. So then, if they do, they will completely furnish us unto the greatest of good works, Christian unity. When we come to examine the Scriptures for teaching on this subject, we find that they speak clearly and fully. The Bible has much to say on the subject of unity. The following quotations are some of the important passages bearing upon unity:

"Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee; for we are brethren." Gen. 13:8.

"Behold, how good and how excellent it is  
For brethren to dwell together **in unity!**  
It is like the precious oil upon the head,

That ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's head,  
That came down upon the skirt of his garments;  
Like the dew of Hermon,  
That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion:  
For there Jehovah commanded the blessing,  
Even life forevermore." Ps. 133.

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have warmth; but how can one be warm alone? And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken." Ecc. 4:9-12.

"The voice of thy watchmen! they lift up the voice, they sing together; for they shall see eye to eye, when Jehovah returneth to Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem." Isa. 52:8-9.

"For one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren." Mat. 23:8.

"If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom can not stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house can not stand." Mark 3:24-5.

"Now this he (Caiaphas) said not of himself; but being high priest that year prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad." John 2:51-52.

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Jno. 10:16.

"Holy father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are." Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me." John 17:11, 20-23.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Cloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this, I mean, that each one of you sayeth, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" I Cor. 1:10-13.

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were ye all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.” I Cor. 12:12-13.

“I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.” Eph. 4:1-6.

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the Gospel.”

“Make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting the other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Phil. 1:27; 2:2-4.

“Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent the Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” John 1:7-11.

“And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel. After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. Amen.” Rev. 7:4, 9-10.

In addition to the above passages there is Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, the major theme of which is the unity of the church. In this letter Paul deals directly and specifically with the subject of Christian unity, and gives a

complete solution of the problem, that, as he states, the man of God may thoroughly furnish unto the good work of unity. Not that the church was divided in Paul's day, but the Christian Scriptures were written for all ages and needs of the church. Paul was directed by the Holy Spirit to write this letter, that, when division came, the church might know how to restore unity. This brings us to the study of this letter, of which this book is an exposition, to bring out Paul's teaching on the subject of Christian unity.

Now, in conclusion of this chapter, we have shown that Christian faith by its nature and content makes Christian unity practicable, because faith follows the course of reason, and is, therefore, practical in its leadings; and Christian faith leads all to the Christian Scriptures, which clearly and definitely reveal the word of God, which all Christians accept as the only practical way or basis of unity. Furthermore, since the Christian Scriptures, which are the source of Christian faith, abound in teaching on the subject of unity, and thereby "thoroughly furnish the man of God unto the good work" of unity, and since Paul's letter to the Ephesians, as we will show in the following chapters, is a clear and definite solution of the problem of unity in the church, for these reasons and others, Christian unity is clearly practicable. While it is a great task and a difficult problem, it is made both possible and practicable through this working combination, "faith working through love." Faith and love working together can solve any Christian problem and perform any Christian task. Love gives the vision that makes unity possible; and faith opens up a practicable way to unity. The details of this way are clearly set out in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which we now propose to study under the following heads or divisions: *The Church For All* and *All For The Church*.

## IV

### A PERSONAL WORD

**A** FEW words in advance of this study of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians in explanation of the divisions of the letter will help in the study of the same. Also the reader might be interested in knowing how the author came by this division. It is not altogether original. While the author is not a dreamer, as was Joseph, nor a believer in dreams, as was Nebuchadnezzar, this division of Paul's letter came to the author in a dream; and at the risk of being thought personal and sentimental for the sake of explaining and emphasizing the above divisions of Paul's letter, this dream, which grew out of my thinking and work, is given. This personal word will also be suggestive, we trust, of practical ways and means of working in the interest of Christian unity. There is a widespread desire on the part of many Christians to-day to do something for unity; but they are at a loss to know what to do and where to take hold of the work. The following is an account of the author's personal work in the interest of Christian unity, which is given in introduction to the study of Paul's Letter on unity in hope of suggesting practical ways and means of working for Christian unity.

I have been working in the interest of Christian unity for several years, and have tried several ways and means of advancing the cause of unity. This work has been necessarily, for the most part, educational and inspirational. While there is a widespread interest in unity,

few are ready and prepared for any definite steps toward the same, or have any well-defined correct ideas as to what Christian unity is and how it may be attained. This necessitates an educational and inspirational propaganda on the essentials of Christian unity and on the ways and means of realizing the same. This was undertaken first through the religious press and by meetings in the various churches in the interest of unity; but there is a sectarian denominational atmosphere about every church and church paper that counteracts and defeats any real unity work therein.

To get away from these ecclesiastical barriers I began the use of tracts, and secured a tent for meetings in the interest of unity, which I found more effective and acceptable. For some reason, the people look upon a tent as a religious "no man's land;" and they come to this open forum more freely and open-mindedly and without denominational bias and alignment. Also things that could not be properly mentioned in the churches could be freely and openly discussed without offense to any one.

However, the greatest difficulty that I have had to overcome has been to convince the people that I was there in the interest of unity. We are so strongly organized and strictly aligned along denominational lines that all our thinking and work are in denominational channels and for sectarian ends, which makes a purely undenominational work in the interest of unity hard for the people to understand and accept. They are at first suspicious of such a work, believing that you have a sectarian card up your sleeve that you will sooner or later play to their undoing. This sectarian suspicion is the first great barrier to unity, and must be overcome before any effective work for unity can be done. Almost all churches are interested in unity; but we have not yet reached the point

where we can trust the sincerity of the other party in his professions of interest in unity. The establishment of a mutual confidence along this line is a pre-essential to any unity work; and, when this is thoroughly done, the work is comparatively easy, because people, divorced from their denominational affiliations, are about the same in mind and heart, and are agreeably surprised to find themselves of one mind and one heart with so many people.

In the interest of a mutual understanding and confidence I used many signs and placards at the tent, such as *Christian Unity, Not To Antagonize But To Harmonize, Not Your Church Nor My Church But Christ's Church, Why Not One Church For This Community, For Our Lord's Unanswered Prayer, We Have The Right To Differ But Not To Divide*; but all these were more or less misunderstood and misconstrued by suspicious sectarians. Being at a loss for a better statement of the motive and purpose of the work that I was trying to do, I had the following dream. I dreamed that I was on my way down the street to the tent for the night meeting; and, as I came in sight of the tent, I saw above it in flaming letters this sign, *The Church For All and All For The Church*, which so impressed me that I woke up, and thought the dream and statement over. The next day, following the suggestion and leading of the dream, I went and had the sign made and placed over the tent. It was, I suppose, just an ordinary dream, born of my thinking and work; yet I have found it a striking and correct statement of unity work,—a better statement, in fact, than I had been able to frame, when awake, so there might have been in it the leading of the Spirit.

In addition to its being a striking and true statement of Christian unity, I found it to be also the major theme and logical divisions of Paul's letter to the Ephesians,

which we were engaged in studying at the tent with the view of bringing out his teaching on unity. Accordingly, I found that, in the first half of the letter, he sets forth, *The Church For All*, and in the latter half, *All For The Church*. I thereupon began the study of Paul's letter under these two heads and the exposition of the same verse by verse and chapter by chapter in these unity meetings, making application of his teaching to the problem of unity to-day. Such an exposition of Paul's teaching on the subject of Christian unity brings the solution of the unity problem to the people in an authoritative way, which commands their attention and acceptance. There is no realm of religion in which people are more careful to be sure of their grounds than in Christian unity. Individually and as a denomination they will proceed without so much care, precision and caution; but in respect to unity they must be sure of their footing, and are ready to draw back at the least appearance of doubtful ground. So, for this reason, it is useless to teach anything in the interest of unity except that which is authoritative. If you speak for unity, you must speak "as one having authority." Accordingly, in my preaching in the interest of unity, I have confined myself to an exposition of Paul's letter to the Ephesians; and I shall do the same in the following chapters of this book. Paul's letter is addressed to "the faithful in Christ Jesus,"—that is, to all Christians of all ages; and to no age is his teaching more applicable and needed than to and by the age in which we are now living. This book proposes to be simply an exposition of Paul's letter with an application of the teaching of the same to the church of to-day. It proposes to show that the teaching of this letter is a complete and practicable solution of the problem of Christian unity, which is so much desired to-day by all communions.

The church, and especially the unity of the same, is the major theme of the letter; and, while many other things are treated, they are set forth in their bearing on the unity of the church. The first three chapters of the letter are devoted to the church as an institution; and the last three chapters to the people that compose the church. In the first half of the letter, according to our division of the same, Paul sets forth, *The Church For All*, and in the latter half, *All For The Church*. We propose to show that Paul has herein completely provided for the establishment and maintenance of a united church and that an application of his teaching to the church to-day will restore it to its original unity. If this book, which has grown out of my experiences, thinking and work in behalf of Christian unity, proves to be a helpful contribution to this great cause, for which Christ prayed, and Paul planned and taught, I shall be humbly glad; and to this end it is written and sent out on its mission of peace. That it may be so read and used is the earnest prayer of the author.



PART I  
THE CHURCH FOR ALL  
EPH. 1-3



## V

### THE CHURCH PLANNED

**P**AUL, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints that are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved: in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him, unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things in the earth; in him, I say, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the council of his will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who before hoped in Christ: in whom ye also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of his glory.” I:1-14.

In the above Paul sets forth the church planned, and states that it was planned “before the foundation of the world.” Without entering into the intricacies and mysteries of foreordination and predestination, which have

been major themes in the theology of the past, we note first that "God chose *us in Christ*." Those in Christ constitute the Church of Christ, which was planned "before the foundation of the world." In this planning of the church before the foundation of the world, we see the true dignity and worth of the church. It was of first importance and consideration with God in His creation of the world and every thing thereon, and, therefore, of more value than every thing else. The world and every thing on the earth were of secondary importance and value in the sight of God, and were made contributory to the church. Of course, Paul is not speaking here of the church as an organization, but of those in Christ, the people that compose the church. This institution, consisting of "those in Christ," is that which claimed the supreme consideration and valuation of Almighty God in his incomprehensible plans for the world. Accordingly, the people of the world to-day need to see and value the church as God sees and values it; then they could not be indifferent toward it.

Paul, furthermore, shows that God chose and planned the church "*in Christ*." This phrase appears in almost every clause of his long statement of the plan of the church, and explains, as far as can be explained, all the mysteries of His plans. He "blessed us *in Christ*;" He "chose us *in Christ*;" He "adopted us *through Christ*;" He "freely bestowed his grace upon us *in Christ*;" He "redeemed us *in Christ*;" He "forgave us *in Christ*;" He "purposed," or planned beforehand every thing *in Christ*; and "summed up all things *in Christ*." In other words, Christ is the final explanation and sum of every thing in the world, of every thing that God has done in time and eternity; and no thing or fact can be understood and explained, except it be seen in connection with

Christ. He is the explanation of foreordination and predestination as well as every other plan and purpose of God.

While God chose those in Christ and made his plans for the church before the foundation of the world; yet it required centuries and ages for the full development and unfolding of these plans. This awaited "a dispensation of the fullness of the times," when all things were ready for the full revelation of these plans. Thereupon Christ came to earth in human form to reveal and execute God's plans for the redemption of the race; and to this end he announced the establishment of the church, saying, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." The church then was planned to prevail against all the opposition of the powers of the evil world; and during the first centuries of its history it did triumph over all the hosts of the prince of this world. Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke, record the history of these early victories; but finally Satan succeeded in dividing the church; and since then its victories have not been so great, because only through unity can there be complete victory. Fortunately, however, the builders of the church left plans and directions for the restoration of unity in the church; and to this end Paul, the wise master-builder of the church, anticipating the needs of the church along this line, wrote the Ephesian letter, teaching us how to secure and maintain unity in the church.

Thus all God's plans for the race found full realization in Christ,—“to sum all things in Christ,” as Paul expresses it, or, as translated by some, “all things were gathered up, or reunited in Christ,” which shows that all things were centered in Christ, and reunited in the church, all of which calls for unity in the church.

Paul states also that all the plans and purposes of God were, "to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory; we (Jews), who had before hoped in Christ, in whom ye (the Gentiles) also, having heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." So then, this church planned in Christ before the foundation of the world, was for both Jews and Gentiles, for all ages and races of men. This was not true of the Mosaic "church in the wilderness," which was for Jews only, the blood descendants of Abraham; but in Christ God planned and built *a church for all*, which Paul reveals as such in the first half of his letter to the Ephesians. Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, the beginning day of this church, Peter, to whom Christ gave "the keys of the kingdom," opened the doors of this church to the Jews; and at the house of Cornelius a short time later he did the same for the Gentiles; and since then it has been *the church for all*; and all people "out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues" have continued to pour into it, and it has been truly a cosmopolitan church, *The Church For All*.

However, it required many years to convince the Jews that the church of Christ is for all, in fact, many of them were never convinced. They had been so long accustomed to the seclusive and exclusive Mosaic church that they were unable to comprehend a cosmopolitan church such as the church of Christ. It took a miracle to convince Peter, to whom was committed the keys of the church; and he in turn had much trouble in convincing his apostolic contemporaries.

Furthermore, the Jewish church had been divided into many seclusive and exclusive sects; and these divisions were destructive of the idea of universality and unity

in a church. There was from the very beginning a Judaizing element in the church that sought to make the church Jewish and to drive the Gentiles into a separate church; but against all such sectarianism Paul stood out always in bold opposition, and declared for the universality and unity of the church of Christ, which constitutes the major theme of his letter to the Ephesians.

There is a great need to-day of re-emphasizing this universality and unity of the church of Christ. Sectarian denominations have become so numerous and exclusive of each other that the unity and the universality of the church have been greatly obscured and largely forgotten. We need to see *The Church For All*, planned by God, executed by Christ and established by the Apostles, a truly cosmopolitan united church. The sectarian conception of the church to-day is small, often limited to the little sect to which the member belongs; and the idea of unity has largely been lost. Accordingly, many sectarians speak of their sect as "*the church of Christ.*" They had as well fill a bathtub with water and call it *the ocean* as to attempt to limit the church of Christ, which is for all, to such narrow boundaries. Nor is Christian unity a unity of any sect or sects, but a unity of all the disciples of Christ. We need to get back to the original universality and unity of the church as set forth by Paul in the letter under study.

## VI

### THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

**F**OR this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which you show toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." 1:15-23.

In the above paragraph Paul sets forth the head of this church for all, which was planned by God before the foundation of the world. The head of an institution is of first importance and consideration in planning and building, wherefore Paul sets out first the head of the church. "For this cause," namely, that Jesus Christ is, as set forth in the preceding paragraph, the explanation and sum of all things, "I make mention of you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him," that they may be able to comprehend Christ and thereby know the plans

and purposes of God. For this understanding there are three essentials as follows:

- (1) "Wisdom,"—intellectual comprehension and information.
- (2) "Revelation,"—from God as to the nature and character of Christ.
- (3) "The eyes of your heart enlightened,"—because Christ is "spiritually discerned" with the eyes of the soul.

With these three essentials one may "know the hope of his calling, the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints and the exceeding greatness of his power, \* \* \* which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." This Christ, who is the explanation and sum of all things, God placed in supreme "authority, rule, and dominion far above all," and made him to be the head of the church.

Inasmuch as this church is for all, it must, therefore, have a head that satisfies all. A universal church without an all-sufficient and all-satisfying head would have been an early and certain failure. Wherefore, God selected Christ Jesus to be the head, who is "of the fullness of him that filleth all in all," "the effulgence of his glory and the very image of his substance," and "in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Surely then, such a head satisfies all, for no fault can be found with such a being as head of the church. In fact, he is eminently qualified both by nature and training to be the head of the world church.

Note, furthermore, that Christ is the real head and not the mere figurehead of the church, as many of his followers would make him. He was given supreme authority, "not only in this world, but also in that which

is to come." Peter failed to get this lesson even on the mount of transfiguration. He wanted to put Moses and Elijah on equal authority with Christ by building a tabernacle to each; but God spoke out of the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." He is placed in supreme authority over Moses and Elijah and all other heads of the church in the past; and in the future he is to be heard over all. This was a distinct shock to the Jews, who held Moses and the Prophets in highest authority; and many of them took offense at Christ's assumption of supreme authority; and he thereby became "a rock of stumbling" unto them. In the foundation of this new spiritual Temple, the world-church, they rejected "the head or chief cornerstone." Even after the establishment of the church there were Judaizers in the church, who attempted to place Moses on equal authority with Christ; but those inspired to speak the word of God always spoke out against such action; however, it took a long time and much teaching on this point to divorce the Jews from Moses and wed them to Christ as the supreme and only head of the church.

Now, if neither Moses nor any of the Prophets was allowed to share the authority of Christ as head of the church, then there is even less grounds for anyone's claim to-day to be the earthly head of the church; however some to-day are disposed to assume this authority under the claim and office of Pope, Bishop, Presbyter, Elder, Editor, etc.; but Paul left no place for any such ecclesiastical authority in the church. Christ and Christ alone was made the head of the church in this world as well as the world to come; and, whenever anyone else assumes to be the earthly head of the church, or to share in any way this supreme authority, trouble and division

result, because Christ is the only head that can satisfy all. This was the cause of first division in the church; and there is no truth that the people to-day need more to realize than the absolute and exclusive supremacy of Christ as head of the church. He never appointed or delegated anyone to be the earthly head of the church in his absence. Not even one of his inspired apostles ever made such a claim for himself. Paul always spoke of himself as "the apostle and servant of Jesus Christ," and never assumed any authority beyond being the mere spokesman of Jesus Christ in the revelation of the will of God, for which he was ready at all times to give his credentials, no one of which can any professed earthly representative of Christ to-day give. So, therefore, let all presumptive earthly heads of the church to-day step down in deference to the supreme authority of Christ as the head of the church, and the cause of unity will be greatly advanced thereby, because a church for all must have a head that satisfies all.

Note also that Christ is "head over *all* things to the church," over the *little* things as well as the *big* things. While no one would assume any authority with respect to the great and important things of the church, yet many do not hesitate to take control and supervision of the small matters; but after all it is the little things that really test one's loyalty; and besides no matter upon which Jesus Christ has spoken can be called a small thing. For instance, some ecclesiastical authorities, looking upon the organization and ordinances of the church as small matters, have changed these from what Christ and his apostles prescribed, on the grounds that these things are non-essentials, and, therefore, subject to the authorities that be in the church to-day; but remember "God put all things in subjection under his feet;" and

“who art thou, O man,” to assume authority over even the least things that were committed to Christ? On the other hand, there is no better way to manifest one’s subjection and loyalty to Christ as head of the church than by a strict compliance to the seemingly small things of the church. This was the cause of Saul’s downfall. He was subject to God in all things except what he considered small matters; yet God rejected him from being king because of his failure to obey these small commands. Likewise, Christians are required to “hearken unto Christ, the prophet like unto Moses, in *all* things whatsoever he shall speak; and it shall be that every soul that shall not hearken unto that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from the people.” Such a recognition of the absolute supremacy of Jesus Christ as “head over all things to the church” is greatly needed to-day to restore unity in the church; and to this end Christ must be made the real head of the church.

## VII

### TERMS OF ENTRANCE INTO THE CHURCH

**A**ND you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all lived in the lusts of your flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest:—but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have we been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that in all the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus: for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.”  
2: I-10.

In the above paragraph Paul sets forth the conditions of entrance into the church. In as much as the church, of which Jesus Christ is the head, is for all, both Jews and Gentiles, the conditions of entrance into this church must be such as will admit all. The conditions of entrance into the Jewish church under Moses, “the church in the wilderness,” did not admit all on the same terms, because it was for the Jews only. Furthermore, in as much as the church includes all the saved through Christ, the conditions of entrance into the church must be the same as the conditions of salvation. These conditions of salvation and entrance into the church were therefore made to admit all, both Jews and Gentiles, upon the same

terms, which Paul sets forth in the above paragraph. Paul shows that neither the Jews nor the Gentiles could enter on the grounds of merit, because the Gentiles were "dead through their trespasses and sins," and the Jews were by conduct and nature "children of wrath, even as the rest." Both the Jews and the Gentiles were alike under the condemnation of sin, as Paul shows in more detail in his letter to the Romans, and, therefore, excluded on the grounds of meritorious works. "But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved)." Accordingly, God had mercy on both Jews and Gentiles, and saved both alike by His grace, which admitted both Jews and Gentiles on the same terms.

Having set forth grace as the general condition of salvation and entrance into the church, Paul adds the specific conditions, "faith" and "good works." The general condition of grace, or mercy would admit all men irrespective of conduct and character, because "God would have all men saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth;" but salvation is further conditioned by "faith," which limits salvation to those that believe, and also by "good works," which further limit the saved to those that do good. Paul, however, is careful in drawing the distinction between meritorious faith and good works of the law on the one hand and good works of faith and obedience on the other hand. Lest some one might conclude that we are meritoriously saved by faith, that is, merely because we believe, Paul adds, "and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;" and, lest some one think that we are saved because of our good works on the grounds of merit, he adds, "not of good works that

no man should glory." This, however, does not exclude Christian good works of faith and obedience, for which Paul says, "we were created in Christ Jesus, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." These good works are made conditions of salvation and entrance into the church; and, that we might know what these good works are, God sent Jesus Christ into the world the prophet like unto Moses, to make known to all the way of salvation; and whatever he prescribed to be done is required of all who would be saved, and enter the church. See Acts 3:22-23.

The question as to the conditions of entrance into the church has greatly disturbed, and often divided the church; and the different views and teaching on this subject have been the cause of much strife and division. Some have taught that the conditions of entrance into the church are different from the conditions of salvation. Accordingly, they make baptism the means, or door of entrance into the church, and then take a vote of the church to receive. Baptism is a means of entrance into the church, I Cor. 12:13; but it is also a condition of salvation. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21. Likewise every other condition of entrance into the church is made a condition of salvation. The conditions that save automatically and simultaneously enter into the church, as they evidently did on the day of Pentecost. "The Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved." Acts 2:47. When a person complied with the prescribed conditions of salvation, the Lord added him to the church, so no ordinance or vote of the church puts one into the church; but Christ alone adds to the church those that are saved; He alone is the door into the church (see John 10:1-9); and He alone admits and excludes from the same. It is man's part to

comply with the conditions of salvation, prescribed by the Lord, and thereby present himself for entrance into his church. Allowing the Lord to thus enter all into the church eliminates all ecclesiastical entrances by voting or by opening the doors by priest or minister; and what the Lord does ought to satisfy all, and restore unity in the churches disturbed and divided over this question.

But the church has been disturbed and divided over the conditions of salvation, which present one for entrance into the church. Some have held to "the doctrine of salvation by grace alone," which Paul makes the general condition of salvation, and have ignored the specific conditions, "faith" and "good works," which Paul also prescribes as conditions of salvation, and have thereby missed the full teaching of Paul on this subject. Whereas, an acceptance and compliance with both the general condition of salvation, "grace," and the specific conditions, "faith" and "good works," on the part of all would settle this question, and restore unity in the church at this point.

But what faith and what good works are made conditions of salvation and entrance into the church? Fortunately, inspired teachers have settled these disturbing questions for us also. That "Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God," is the faith (see Mat. 16: 16-18; John 11: 27; Acts 9: 37; 16: 31); and the good works are defined in the following: "All things whatsoever he (Jesus) shall speak unto you." Acts 3: 22-23. However, none of these things should be exalted and emphasized above others, or ignored as has been the case with baptism, one of the things spoken or commanded by Jesus. Mat. 28: 19. Some have overemphasized this command by their much preaching on this subject to the neglect of other things; and others have ignored it as a

non-essential, notwithstanding Jesus makes it a condition of salvation. Mark 16:16. Consequently, these extreme and divergent positions on baptism have caused trouble and division in the church; whereas, if it had been accepted and followed by all simply as a command of the Lord, or one of the good works of faith and obedience, there would have been unity in the church at this point, which would bring great peace to the same.

In conclusion, Paul must have realized the trouble that the church would have over the conditions of salvation or entrance into the church, wherefore he made these conditions plain and simple, namely, "grace," "faith" and "good works;" and accordingly all those that accept and comply with these conditions are saved, and thereupon added by the Lord to His church; and then there is unity in the church as to this question as well as all others, about which the Lord has spoken. Wherefore Paul, in outlining *the church for all*, prescribed conditions of entrance that would admit all upon the same terms, both Jews and Gentiles; and he thereby opened up the way whereby all may come together and dwell together in *the church for all*.

## VIII

### THE PLAN FOR UNITY OF THE CHURCH

**W**HEREFORE remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who were called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye at that time were separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father. So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner-stone in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." 2:11-22.

The above paragraph contains Paul's plan for uniting the church. Inasmuch as the church is for all, and salvation and entrance into the church are offered to all on the same terms, consequently all kinds and classes, races and colors, sects and parties are gathered together in the church, which necessitates a plan for uniting this mixed multitude. When Peter opened the doors of the church on the day of Pentecost to the Jews and to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, both Jews and Gentiles poured into the church from all the religious sects and parties among them; and the church became a mixed assembly

of all the religious elements in the world. The church, however, was not intended to be a conglomerate mass of discordant religious elements but a harmonious union of all integral parts, which necessitated a plan for uniting all the religious sects and parties that came into the church. The merging of these into one harmonious whole was the stupendous task of the Apostolic church. The Apostle Paul was the chosen leader in uniting the Jews and Gentiles; and fortunately he left on record, as quoted above, his plan for uniting them. While this union was slow in progress, and much teaching and diplomacy were required to bring them together, nevertheless they were finally united in one harmonious body, and continued so for four hundred years. Now, a plan that united all the sects and parties among the Jews and Gentiles, who were poles apart, and hated each other with all the animosity and bitterness, of which the human soul is capable, can do the same for the sects in the church to-day; and to this end we propose in this chapter a study and application of Paul's plan for unity to the divided church of to-day.

Before Christian unity can be made practical, a practical plan, by which, and upon which, all Christians can unite, must be found. This seems to be the one thing lacking to-day to make unity practicable. In answer to this demand for a practical plan for Christian unity, five plans have so far been offered. The Roman Catholic Church proposes a return to the mother church, where, they claim, there was unity until Luther and other reformers broke it up. This plan would undoubtedly secure unity, but it would do so at the price of two things in the world that are worth more than unity; namely, loyalty and liberty, without which it would not be Christian unity; and besides, such a unity would not

satisfy the requirements of Scriptural faith, and could not, therefore, be Scriptural unity. The Episcopalians also have a plan to bring the Christian world together. The Protestant Episcopal Church has always claimed to be a sort of half-way house between Catholicism and Protestantism, and has hoped to bring Rome down and Geneva up to this common level; and to this end this communion offers what is known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral as a practical plan for Christian unity. But one of the items in this plan is the Historic Bishopric, or Apostolic Succession, which excludes its acceptance by all congregational or democratic communions. The Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists propose a federation of all the churches, which, of course, is not unity at all, and, for this reason, has not been seriously considered by the churches. Another plan, first proposed by the Campbells and advocated to the present by those committed to this plan, is a restoration of the apostolic church and unity upon the same. But there have arisen differences as to what the apostolic church was in all respects, and some doubt the propriety of restoring the apostolic church in some respects, so this plan has so far failed to unite the churches. The latest plan to be offered is the Philadelphia Plan, recently formulated and adopted by representatives of many of the leading denominations assembled in Philadelphia to devise a plan for unity. This plan provides for what some consider a super-church with governmental authority, to which many communions object, and are not likely to accept. In fact, there have been more or less criticisms and objections to all the plans; and all have so far failed to unite the church. There is much to be commended and accepted in all the above plans; but all of them together have so far failed to bring the churches into any visible

unity; however they have taught us some very important lessons.

In the first place, the failure of the above plans has taught us that Christian unity can not be an ecclesiasticism, where one man or a number of men constitute the head of the church; that has always been religious tyranny and spiritual despotism. Not a union of denominations, where one denomination swallows up all the others; that would be a denominational monster, or monstrosity. Not a federation of sects, where each sect is fitted into its allotted niche and place, and agrees to occupy as little space as possible; that would be stagnation and death. Not an aggregation of unreconciled sects, where each has signed an armistice; that has always resulted in renewed hostilities. Not a peace by compromise, where all agree to maintain a respectful silence such as the tombs of a graveyard; that would be a living death. Not a bargain, where one thing is given up by one, and another thing is given up in return by another; that would be selling out. Not a forced union, where all speak the same thing through slavish fear; that would be a new edition of "The Book of Martyrs." Not a uniformity of opinions, where each one sneezes when the other takes snuff; that would be religious hypocrisy. Not a union of all the theories and philosophies of the religious thinkers and dreamers of the past; that would be a religious museum. Not a union of all the modern cults and isms; that would be fanaticism, of which the world is full already. Not a union in theory or name only; but a real, practical, organic union of the dismembered parts of the divided body of Christ; and that which is needed most to effect such a union is a practical, acceptable plan.

In view of the failure of the above plans, which were wrought out of the best thought and experience of the

past, and in view of the fact that the churches of to-day have no other to offer, where shall we look for a better plan? When we have exhausted all human resources of the past and the present, where do we usually look for help? "My help cometh from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth." Yes, but God has not given us any help at this point; He has left us in the darkness to find our way out of the confusion of division into the light of unity. If this be true, Christian unity is indeed a hopeless undertaking. However, is it not strange that Christ would have prayed for the unity of all His disciples, and commanded them to work for the same, without giving them some plan and basis for unity? Furthermore, if "the scriptures furnish us completely unto every good work," as Paul says they do, is it not strange that they do not give us a practical working plan for Christian unity, the greatest of good works? To be sure, they do give a plan for unity, as stated by Paul in the above paragraph, which we now propose to study. Inasmuch as a plan for unity is the one thing needed to-day to realize Christian unity, Paul's plan will be considered in detail, which will make this chapter of considerable length; but the whole plan will be crowded into one chapter in order to preserve the unity of this plan.

Paul's plan for Christian unity maintains the strictest Christian loyalty, yet grants the largest liberty, and insures the fullest unity. An analytical study of this plan will show that it contains seven basic items or fundamental principles (a heptagon instead of a quadrilateral), the first of which is,

#### A COMMON STANDARD OF AUTHORITY

*"For he [Christ] is our peace, who made both [Jews and Gentiles] one."* The only way that peace can be

made between religious sects is by bringing them to agree, "for how can two walk together, except they agree?" and the only way to bring them to agree is to bring them to accept a common standard of religious authority, because without such a standard there is no point of contact or common ground on which to stand. As long as the Jews had one religious standard, and the Gentiles another, there was no hope of peace and unity among them, so Paul brought both to accept Christ as their peace, or common standard of authority, which made both one. Paul did not call an assembly and conference of all the religious leaders and authorities of that day to discuss Moses and the prophets and Socrates and Baal, to see how much they held in common, thereby hoping to formulate a common standard that all could accept and unite upon; but he set up a new standard of religious authority, Christ Jesus, and brought both Jews and Gentiles to accept Him as "their peace," or common standard of authority in all matters of religion, and thereby "made both one." The acceptance of Christ by all sects as the common standard of authority in religion is, therefore, the first step in Paul's plan for Christian unity. But do not all Christian sects to-day so accept Christ? Yes, theoretically they do; but really they do not. Christ said, "All authority in heaven and earth is given unto me;" and Paul said, "He is head over all things to the church." These words do not permit of any divided or delegated authority, such as claimed by the Pope, the bishop, the editor of the church paper, or any other modern ecclesiastical authority that claims to speak with authority for the church. Christ, and Christ alone, is our peace, or common standard of authority. But Christ is not here to-day to speak His mind and thereby make peace, so, therefore, can not be our real or visible standard of

authority. Neither was He here in Paul's day; yet He was their "peace." Paul, in discussing the religious standards of his day, says, "The Jews seek after a sign"—the supernatural, which was the Jewish test of authority; and, "the Greeks seek after wisdom"—human philosophy, which was the Greek standard; but "we have the mind of Christ," which is the Christian standard of authority. Paul claimed to have the mind of Christ, and was ready at all times to give his credentials for the same; and he called upon all, both Jews and Gentiles, to accept this as their common standard of authority in religion. Likewise, we have "the mind of Christ," which has come down to us from the inspired writers of the Bible. The mind of Christ is found in the words, deeds and character of Christ, as set forth in the Christian Scriptures, which fully reveal His mind on every essential matter that has to do with the work and worship of the church to-day. Any one to-day that claims to have an added revelation of the mind of Christ should be able, as Paul, to give his credentials for the same; otherwise, it is no part of the mind of Christ. Such claims have been a fertile cause of divisions in the church; so the only sure way to unity is by a return to the mind of Christ as revealed in the Christian Scriptures, which is the only Christian standard of authority that all can accept. The mind of Christ as herein revealed is clear and definite on every essential that has to do with the church; and an acceptance of His mind as final in religion on the part of all is the first step toward unity according to Paul's plan; and this first step prepares the way for the second, which is

#### THE REMOVAL OF DIFFERENCES

*"And brake down the middle wall of partition, having*

*abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace."*

The tearing down and the removal of "the middle wall of partition," or differences, was the second step in Paul's plan for unity. The chief differences, or the highest wall of partition, between Jews and Gentiles was the law of Moses, which Christ fulfilled and took out of the way, "nailing it to the cross." The law of Moses was very exclusive and inclusive; and it had walled the Jews in from the religious world for centuries, and thereby prevented any union with those on the outside, so this barrier to unity had to be removed before Christian unity could be effected. The breaking down of middle walls of partition, or the removal of differences, is not an easy step to take nor a pleasant undertaking to accomplish; yet it is folly to try to unite without settling this matter of differences. What shall we do with our differences?, is a baffling question; yet it can not be ignored in any practical plan for unity. To say nothing about differences in a discussion of Christian unity is like the city man that hired to a farmer, and, on being ordered to grease the wagon, greased it all over except on the axles, the only places that needed greasing. Just so with our differences, the points of friction are the places to oil; and, if the unity wagon ever rolls, it must be greased at the places of our differences. This is not the popular plan for unity, as Dr. Armitage states in the following:

"It is a popular idea that kneeling on the same floor, sitting on the same bench, singing the same hymn, uniting in the same prayer (when we have never been divided at all as to the floor, the bench, the hymn or the prayer), and being as different in all other respects as possible, constitutes Christian union. Men of every hue of faith and opinion, and every variety of practice, too, happen to meet in one board, or on one platform, or under one

roof, and because they are not bitter, and feel kindly toward each other, they consider that they are making great attainments in the mysteries of Christian union. Yet not a point of difference is yielded in any respect; and this is looked upon very generally as good, fair Bible union."

However, before such a union can be effected all essential religious differences must be broken down; and, if this was done in Paul's day, there is no good reason why it can not be done to-day. Christians ought to at least be able to discuss amicably their differences with this end in view. Business men do so, and often settle their differences in this way; and shame on Christians, if they can not do the same. However, Christian differences are often exaggerated and over-emphasized. Differences among Christians ought to always be discussed in connection with their agreements to be seen in their true light and value. To this end let us first see some of our agreements and keep these in mind as we consider our differences, as follows:

1. We all believe in the Holy God, Jehovah, the God of the Bible, our Father.
2. We all believe in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, our teacher.
3. We all believe in the Holy Son, Jesus the Christ, our Saviour.
4. We all believe in the Holy Book, the Bible, our rule of faith and practice.
5. We all believe in the Holy Church, the body of Christ, the institution for Christian work and worship.
6. We all believe in the Holy Ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
7. We all believe in the Holy day, the Lord's day.
8. We all believe in the Holy life, Christian life.

These agreements could be further increased; but these

are sufficient to show that we are largely agreed already. In fact, the above are the great essentials of Christianity; and shows that we are nine-tenths united as we are. Furthermore, when we come to an open, frank confession and statement of our differences, many of them will be found to be either imaginary, nominal or historical. Many differences among Christians that used to be pronounced and divisive have passed away, and others are passing; but there are yet others that must be removed before Christians can unite.

What are these remaining differences? Nine out of ten Christians do not even know what these differences are; and in nine cases out of ten, when you do find one that knows, he is ashamed of the differences. But whether the differences be many or few, essential or non-essential, Paul teaches us in his plan for unity how to remove the same, thus, let "Christ break them down." Through his words, deeds and character, as revealed in the Christian Scriptures, he has expressed his mind on every essential matter that has to do with the church; and this should be final with all that accept his mind as the Christian standard of authority. No difference can be settled without a common standard of authority. Without a common standard of weights and measures business differences could not be settled; but with it differences in business can be settled. Just so religious differences can be removed by submitting them to the mind of Christ for settlement. But the trouble is, we are not always willing for Christ to break down our differences; we want to be heard ourselves, and are not always willing for Christ, who is our peace, to break them down.

Yes, but we differ as to the meaning of what Christ has said on many things about which we differ. Christ expressed his mind so clearly and simply on most things

that there is practically no differences among the well-informed as to His meaning; but the most of our differences are over matters upon which He did not speak at all. What shall we do with these differences? Well, if neither Christ nor His inspired apostles said anything about these things, or did any thing about them; nor no light can be had from His character on these things, then these things are non-essentials; and our differences over such are immaterial, and should be treated as such. We therefore must say nothing about these things, nor do nothing about them that will disturb the unity of the church. For instance, differences over such things as missionary and benevolent societies, Bible schools, church papers, church buildings, organs, choirs, song-books, tuning forks, orders of worship, etc., are of this class. They belong to the class of things spoken of by Paul in his letters such as "eating meat," "keeping days," etc., the faith we have about such things, Paul says, "Have thou to thyself before God;" and it must be exercised in such a way as to "cause no one to stumble or fall;" and when such comes up for congregational action, the will of the majority should be accepted; yet the will of the minority must be respected "for the sake of the conscience of the weak brother," if there be any that make it a matter of conscientious faith. In such cases Christian love is to determine the wise thing to do.

On the other hand, so far as all matters upon which Christ has spoken are concerned, differences must be settled by His expressed mind as revealed in the canonical Christian Scriptures, "rightly divided," or rationally interpreted. This will settle every essential difference; and all other differences can be adjusted by common sense and Christian love.

## THE REMOVAL OF OUR FEELINGS

*“And might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh.”* The third step in Paul’s plan, as stated above, provides for the removal and destruction of all religious sectarian feelings that stand in the way of Christian unity. We usually think of our differences as the greatest barrier to unity; but not so,—our feelings will be found to be the last and hardest obstacle to remove. What shall we do with our feelings?, is a more baffling question than, What shall we do with our differences?, because religious feelings have a stronger hold than religious convictions on people. Out of the feelings springs sectarianism, the worst pest that grows in the human heart. It chokes out all good impulses, and fertilizes all evil passions. It has kindled martyr flames, pierced innocent hands, broken gentle hearts, crowned with thorns and crucified the Saviour of the race. Like a vampire it has sapped the life out of religion and the spirituality out of worship, and left the church an empty shell and the soul a dry husk. Its history is the history of “the seven woes” in the annals of the church; and it has been the chief agent and factor in all the divisions of the church; “for, where there is envying and strife,” says Paul, “there is confusion and every evil work.” Most of the confusion and evil work in the church have grown out of sectarianism that is destructive of the peace, progress and development of the church. Paul found the rankest sectarianism gone to seed in the hearts of the Jews and Gentiles, who hated each other with all the bitterness and animosity of which the human soul is capable, and he had to purge their

hearts of all such feelings before they could be reconciled and united.

Religious feelings are the result of competition and rivalry in religion, which engenders partisan prejudiced feelings. No person can be an active loyal member of a party either social, political or religious without becoming partisan. This is one of the worst features of division in the church; it makes people prejudiced and sectarian; and no prejudiced sectarian can unite with all the people of God. If there were no other barrier to keep him out, prejudice would isolate him. The heart must be emptied of all sectarian feelings to unite with Christians of every Church.

Wherefore, Paul put into his plan for unity an item for the eradication of sectarianism from the hearts of both Jews and Gentiles. "He reconciled them both." "Reconcile" is a strong word that calls for the emptying of the heart of all hostile prejudiced feelings. No mere covering up or ignoring these feelings for the sake of appearances and politeness will suffice. The heart must be emptied of all sectarian bitterness, and filled and sweetened with brotherly love.

Also, "He reconciled them both *unto God.*" One must be truly and genuinely reconciled unto God before he can become reconciled to his brethren. The churches to-day are full of people that are not reconciled to God. It is useless to undertake to reconcile these unto each other until they first become reconciled unto their God. They must make their peace with God first, must remove everything between them and God; and then it will be an easy matter to reconcile them to each other. The people that live closest to God never cause trouble in the church, but those whose lives and characters are at variance with God are the ones that sow strife and discord

among brethren. Wherefore, Paul, writing to the Corinthian Christians, says, "We are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, *be ye reconciled unto God.*" In no other way can peace and harmony be maintained in the church, because the unreconciled unto God will soon become the unreconciled in the church. The man that is at war with God will sooner or later be at war with his brethren. So Paul went to the fountain-head of strife and discord, the personal relationship between man and God, and established peace there; and this peace flowed out in streams of harmony among brethren. So then, the question of unity among brethren is primarily a matter of unity with God. Those that are one with God will be one with each other. So, therefore, Paul "reconciled them both unto God," that they might be reconciled unto each other.

Furthermore, Paul says, "He reconciled them both *in one body.*" In other words, Paul did not put the Jews in one church and the Gentiles in another church, but he put both together "*in one body;*" and in so doing he precluded another source of hostile religious feelings among Christians. Separate worshipping bodies, or churches, have been a fertile source of prejudiced feelings among Christians. The overlapping of these churches and the consequent rivalry and competition between the same have brought Christians into conflict, strife and hard feelings with each other. A multiplicity of religious bodies results always in a multiplicity of bitter feelings between the members of the same; so this source of bitterness must be removed to stop the flow of prejudice among Christians. Wherefore, all must find their way back to this one original body of Christ, and there live together and work and worship together as

the one family or household of God. Surrounded as we are to-day by a great multiplicity of Christian bodies, it is hard to think and trace our way back to this original body of Christ. Some claim to be able to stand in the church in which they worship and shake the chain of ecclesiastical descent and hear it rattle in the streets of Jerusalem; but no one but themselves can hear it. In fact, the body of Christ can not be thus identified by historical continuity, because there have been so many, many departures and fallings-away in the same that this can not be relied upon; besides Christ did not provide nor intend any such identification of His church; but He assured us that, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and there is to be found the church of Christ. So, when all the Christians in a community come together in the name of Christ to worship God, this is undoubtedly the church or one body of Christ.

One of the great hindrances in the way of Christians doing this is the many separate church buildings in every community. These must be abandoned for a common church home. As long as Christians worship apart, they will drift further and further apart; and bitter feelings will grow and multiply. What to do with these buildings and church property in general is a great problem and obstacle to Christian union and one that so far has baffled human solution. If a cyclone could be sent through every community as at Flat Creek, Tenn., and blow all of them away except one, or still better all, then all would be in a position to come together and build a common church home, and thereby remove this fertile source of prejudice among Christians. Paul knew the evils of separate worshipping bodies, so he put both Jews and Gentiles "*in one body.*"

Note also that all prejudice and bitterness between Jews and Gentiles were removed "through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Paul held up before both the cross of Christ, or Christ crucified, the vision of which slew all enmity in their hearts, for no one can cherish any bitterness in the presence of the cross. No one can behold Jesus dying on the cross for the salvation of the world, and hear Him utter with His last breath, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do," and hold bitter feelings in his heart against any of the followers of Christ. In the presence of such forgiveness, one cannot hold bitterness and hard feelings in his heart against others. The cross of Christ is the only influence in the world that can empty the heart of all bitterness, and fill and sweeten it with love for God and man. The love that overshadows the cross warms, softens and melts the hearts of all that believe in Christ, and welds them together in the bonds of Christian unity. So then, if Christians ever unite, it will be at the foot of the cross of Christ, because nowhere else can his followers lay aside all feelings that keep them apart. This is another reason for keeping the cross prominent in the hearts and lives of all Christians; and to this end the Lord's Supper was placed in the worship of the church. Christ said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me;" and he will draw all together into Christian unity through his exaltation on the cross, "having slain the enmity thereby."

When, through the influence of the cross, they were reconciled, Paul's plan provided also a way to keep them reconciled, as follows: "And he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh." It was just as important to maintain this reconciliation as it was to effect it, otherwise unity would

have ended with the reconciliation. Reconciliation was to be maintained by the preaching of peace to all parties alike. Paul knew that numberless things would arise in the church that would disturb and disrupt, so he enjoined the preaching of peace—the pouring of oil on the troubled waters. “So then let us follow after the things that make for peace,” “giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.” Paul knew that this was the only way to keep unity in the church. The church is the most inflammable institution in the world, and the preaching and following of peace is the only way to keep down and quench the flames of strife and division in the church. “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the sons of God.” Some in Paul’s day preached Christ even of envy and strife, and some to-day preach a military gospel, and wage unceasing war on the sects, either not knowing or having forgotten that the gospel of Christ is a message of peace and good will, and that Christians are nowhere commanded to fight people. We are commanded to “fight the good fight of the faith,” but nowhere are we told to fight the sects. Sectarianism can not be destroyed in this way. The preaching of the cross of Christ and peace and good will among all men is the only way to destroy sectarianism and maintain unity in the church. The fourth item in Paul’s plan for unity is

#### A COMMON ACCESS UNTO THE FATHER

“*Through him (Christ) we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.*” The question as to how to come to the Father, or what to do to be saved, has been a disturbing issue in the church from the beginning. In fact, the church has often divided at this point; and there can be no hope in the future for unity in the church

unless this question can be agreeably settled. As it is to-day, almost every church has a different way or something distinctive in its way of bringing people to the Father. But what difference does it make anyway, just so they reach the Father, and are saved? "There are many ways to heaven, so it matters little which you take, just so you reach there." This may or may not be true; but there is one thing certain, namely, we can never have Christian unity as long as we have these many ways of coming to God for salvation. If Paul had not provided for a common access to the Father in his plan, we would know this by experience, because there has been much trouble in the church over these different ways of salvation. But Paul anticipated everything that would disturb the unity of the church, and provided for the same. Accordingly, he required that both Jews and Gentiles come to the Father in the same way. In other words, the Jews did not come to the Father in one way, and the Gentiles in another; but "through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." Just so all to-day must have a common access to the Father, if we are to have Christian unity; and Paul in the above statement opens up the way by which all may come to God together, and thereby have unity.

Note first that "*through him* (Christ)" both came to the Father. Both Jews and Gentiles were required to come to God *through Jesus Christ*. The Jews were not permitted to come to God through Moses and the High Priest of the Temple, as they had been accustomed, nor were the Gentiles allowed to come through the person of their choosing and religion; but "*through him* (Christ) we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." Christ himself emphasized the necessity of this, saying, "I am the door of the sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto

you, he that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." There is no other approach to God except through Jesus Christ, so all must come through Him, who alone is "the way" of salvation. This all of the followers of Christ believe and teach and practice in bringing people to God.

But note also that both were required to come "*in one Spirit,*" the Holy Spirit, that is, according to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus Christ sent into the world after his departure to teach through the Apostles the way to the Father, or the way of salvation. John 14:16-26. The Apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit began their teaching on the day of Pentecost; and their teaching and acts under the leadings of the Holy Spirit were written by Luke in his Acts of the Apostles, which is the teaching of the Holy Spirit on how to come to the Father. In almost every chapter there is an account of how the Apostles brought people to God; and in every case the way was the same. The way was so plain and well-known that it was known as "*the way;*" and this way will be as well known to any one to-day who studies Acts of the Apostles to learn the way to the Father. Any one, therefore, that comes to God according to the teaching of this book comes "*in one Spirit,*" as Paul requires for unity. A study of the teaching of the Holy Spirit in this book will reveal these successive steps, required of all in coming to the Father, namely, faith, confession, repentance and baptism. Accordingly, all churches require these things of those who would come to God to-day; and there is a difference only as to the place of baptism in their ways of bringing people to God. Every church except the Quakers gives it some place on the program for bringing people to the Father.

Some, however, give it a merely nominal place, claiming that it was merely an incidental and accommodation to the Apostolic age; others that it is a non-essential ordinance that may or may not be observed in any form that one chooses; yet they are not willing to leave it off altogether as do the Quakers. They would have to leave off faith and repentance also, because they are co-ordinately united with baptism in the Scriptures, Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38; and all look upon these as essential steps in coming to God, so baptism for the sake of its connection in the Scriptures is continued in the many churches. That it formed a part of the original way of coming to the Father cannot be gainsaid. Christ himself came by the way of baptism, Mat. 3:13-17; and he put baptism in his great commission to his disciples, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16. Paul and all the other apostles came to the Father by the way of baptism, Acts 22:16; and they all emphasized its significance and importance, Acts 8:38, 10:47; Rom. 6:1-17; Gal. 3:27; I Pet. 3:21; Jno. 3:5; I Jno. 5:8. But why stickle, argue and divide over the place of baptism in bringing people to God? Cannot all that desire to come to the Father comply with this simple command, and trust Jesus Christ to put it for the proper purpose? Surely he knows the place and reasons for this ordinance, and will make no mistake as to its design for all those that trust him in their obedience to this command. Some contend that it is a form, and it is, Rom. 1:17; others claim that it is a door into the church, and it is, I Cor. 12:13; and still others insist that it is for the remission of sins, and it is, Acts 2:38. Why can not it be for all these things, and everybody stand for the whole truth of baptism, and thereby stand together instead of standing for only a part of the truth and standing apart? Besides there is no reason for people being

divided over the design of baptism anyway, because this belongs in the realm of the purposes of God, where it is not the part of man to argue but to do.

But we further differ as what the act of baptism is. There is no difference among the well-informed as to what it was in Apostolic times, namely, immersion in water, because this is revealed plainly in the New Testament; but many contend that other forms will do as well. Inasmuch as all accept the validity of immersion, why can not all unite on this form? The bishops of the Episcopal Church make this proposition to the Christian world; and it seems that all those that desire unity ought to accept the same. The proposition to give all their choice of forms for the sake of unity is folly, for the history of the church and the experience of the past show conclusively that we can never have a united church upon a divided baptism. This proposition would divide more than it would unite. There is but one truly catholic baptism, which is immersion; and, unless we can come together upon this, we will remain hopelessly divided over the way to the Father. Surely all those who are willing to come to the Father as Paul directs, "through him (Christ) we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father," will be willing to come by the form of baptism, prescribed by the Holy Spirit speaking through the Apostles. No other form can ever satisfy all, and insure unity in the church; and we can never have unity in the church without a *common access to the Father*. Wherefore Paul says in his plan for unity, "Through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." The next item in this plan is,

#### A DEMOCRATIC CHURCH

*"So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners,*

*but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*” Accordingly, the Gentiles were received into the church on the same plane with the Jews, with no racial or class distinction whatever; they were all fellow-citizens with the saints, and brethren in the household of God. The words “fellow-citizens” and “brethren” are democratic words, and express a democratic relationship in the church. As to governmental form, the church of Christ is a democratic institution—a theocracy, over which Christ is head—and all are fellow-citizens, or a great household of God, over which the Father is head, and all are brethren. There were no ranks, castes or ruling classes in the apostolic church. However, the apostles had great difficulty in establishing this democracy in the church. The Jews and the Gentiles who came into the church had never known anything except a monarchical or class form of government in both church and state, so they had to be taught the very first principles of democracy. In almost every letter to the churches, Paul emphasized the democracy of the church, saying: “Where there can not be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all and in all.” Every possible class and distinction are herein prohibited in the church; such as racial, neither Greek nor Jew; religious, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision; educational, neither barbarian nor Scythian; civil, neither bondman nor freeman; all are Christians, and Christ is in all, which is all-sufficient for all races and classes in the world. One of the most touching and most beautiful incidents in the apostolic church was Paul’s letter to Philemon, in which he endeavours to put master and slave upon the common plane of Christian brotherhood. Every word in the New Testament, referring to the brotherhood

in Christ, is a democratic word, such as "disciples," "saints," "brethren," "fellow-citizens," "God's fellow-workers," etc. However, in spite of all this democratic teaching, the church has not always been a democratic institution, nor is it so to-day in many respects. Such classes and distinctions as popes, cardinals, priests, bishops, pastors, clergy and laity have no place in a democratic church of Christ as revealed in the New Testament. To maintain the above classes in the church, the denominations have built up great ecclesiasticisms—"a towering structure, gradation above gradation—a living pyramid—on whose summit is enthroned a ruling mind, at whose base is stretched out a kneeling and obedient world."

However, even among those that claim to be democratic, class rule often asserts and maintains itself through organized presbyteries, associations, societies, boards, religious papers, etc. Besides this ecclesiastical rule from without by the above agencies, there is also often hierarchal rule within by domineering elders, who "lord it over God's heritage," which was forbidden in the apostolic church, because such has no place in a democratic church (I Pet. 5:3). This is one of the worst forms of domineering ecclesiasticism that has ever risen in the church, and the hardest to get rid of, because an evil within is always worse and more tenacious than one without. Many elders, intoxicated on Scriptural references to the rulership of elders, which they neither rightfully understand nor fully appreciate, forget that they are only the servant rulers of the congregation (I Pet. 5:1-5), and assert their divine (?) right and lifetime rulership over the congregation, for which there is not a vestige of Scriptural authority. Any church officer or board that makes such a claim, and refuses to listen to the voice of the congregation, is a usurper of a democratic authority,

and should, therefore, be removed by the same voice or vote that placed him in office. Lifetime office tenure has no place in a democratic government, and the right and power to elect carries with it the right and power to remove; however, many congregations have suffered themselves to be robbed of these democratic rights by a domineering eldership or board. The church has suffered from this hierarchal rule within as much, perhaps, as from that without; and between these upper and lower ecclesiastical millstones the democracy of the church has often either been crushed out or reduced to a minimum.

There seems to be an innate desire in man for power and position, which, from the very beginning, has been destructive of the democracy of the church; but, without real democracy in the church government there can be no unity in the church, or at least no Christian unity. An enforced unity may exist under monarchical and hierarchal forms of church government, but this is not Christian unity. The Christian is God's freeman, and he must, therefore, have a unity consistent with freedom, which is possible only in a democratic church. The close of the great World War virtually marked the end of monarchical and hierarchal forms of government in state, and the end of the same in church will soon follow. There is a strong and loud cry in every denomination to-day for a more democratic church, which must be heard and answered by the restoration of the democracy of the apostolic church, which is an essential item in Paul's plan for Christian unity. "Ye are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and with the household of God."

#### THE FOUNDATION OF UNITY

*"Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and*

*prophets, Christ himself being the chief cornerstone."* Paul thus lays the foundation for Christian unity, which is the sixth item in his plan for unity. Nothing can be better and more lasting than the foundation on which it is built. If the foundation is rightly and properly laid, the superstructure will stand every strain; but, if it is poorly and wrongfully founded, it cannot stand or last. Christ emphasized this in his Sermon on the Mount, saying a wise man "built his house upon a rock: and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon the rock. \* \* \* And a foolish man built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall thereof." This explains the fall and failure of many plans for Christian unity in the past. They were not rightly founded; nor did they stand for anything definite and worth while. People can not unite and stand together except they stand for some things that are true and lasting. Wherefore, Paul, "the wise master-builder laid the foundation; and another buildeth thereon; but let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid" for Christian unity, which is "built upon the prophets and apostles, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone." This is the personal foundation of Christian unity. There can be no religious unity without an agreement on the personal religious authorities that underlie and stand back of that religion, and constitute the authoritative foundation of the same.

First, Paul put "the prophets" in the foundation of Christian unity, the prophets of the old or preceding dispensation, the Jewish religious authorities. Christ

did the same in his sermon on the mount, which is the constitution of Christianity, saying, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfill." This word, "fulfill," does not mean to bring to an end but to "develop, perfect." Christ not only stated and defined his attitude toward the law and the prophets of the Jewish dispensation, but he illustrated the same by specific laws, showing his further development and perfection of the same. Wherefore Paul put "the prophets" in the foundation for unity. In fact, no man inspired of God ever rejected "Moses and the prophets;" notwithstanding some to-day want to leave them out of everything that is Christian. In fact, you had as well read a last year's almanac to some as Moses and the prophets; but Christ and Paul did not so teach. They quoted them, and stood for them. However, we do not incorporate the law of Moses and the Old Testament prophecies into Christianity, except in the way and to the extent as defined and set out by Christ and Paul in the New Testament Scriptures, which was a troublesome question in the Apostolic church, and is beyond the scope of this treatise except as it touches the unity of the church to-day. On this point it suffices to say that all Christians who desire to unite and stand together must stand for "the prophets," whom Paul put into the foundation of Christian unity.

Paul put also "the apostles" of new dispensation into the foundation of Christian unity. Christ had spent three years in training and teaching the twelve chosen for this apostleship; and after his departure he sent the Holy Spirit to "lead them into all truth and bring to their memory all things whatsoever he had taught them," so they were thoroughly qualified as religious authorities for the foundation of Christianity. However, in these

latter days there has arisen a sect of modernists, "higher critics," "modern viewpointers," "new-thought advocates," who cry, "Back to Christ," and refuse to hear "the apostles;" but no one can consistently accept the Christ of the New Testament without accepting the apostles as his authorized spokesmen. They were ready at all times to give their credentials "by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit." Besides they were "eyewitnesses of his majesty," who "declared what they heard and saw." "We have the mind of Christ," says Paul. "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden. \* \* \* But unto us God revealed it through the Spirit." They were of the "men that spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." So, therefore, to refuse to hear them is to refuse to hear the Holy Spirit, which is the highest blasphemy.

Lastly, Paul put Christ in the foundation of Christian unity as "the chief cornerstone," or keystone, connecting "the prophets" of the old dispensation with "the apostles" of the new. Christ was the connecting link between the two and the final religious authority, to whom each looked. So it would be, of course, the height of inconsistency to leave Christ out of anything that claims to be Christian. No one would openly do this; but some endeavour to substitute a Christ of their own imagination and fabrication for the historic Christ of the Bible. The Christ of the Scriptures is the only Christ that we know anything about. There is no "Christ of to-day," or "Christ of the Middle Ages," or "of the first century." "But thou art the same," yesterday, to-day and forever. Christ is not an undefined abstract ideal of any one's conceiving, but a historic character, or being, that came from God, and lived and died among

men, and then returned to God, of whom the Christian Scriptures are the only authentic history; and, when this account is rejected or changed to suit the ideas of anyone, "the chief cornerstone" of Christianity is removed, and the whole superstructure falls to earth as all the false religions of the past have done.

The foundation for Christian unity as laid by Paul the wise master-builder, is, therefore, "the prophets and apostles, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone." You will observe that there is no place left in this foundation for any modern religious authorities such as the Pope, the Bishop, Mrs. Eddy, Pastor Russell, etc.; and union on them cannot, therefore, be Christian union, though it is falsely so called. If Christians ever unite, they must unite upon the foundation laid by Paul, because "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid;" and any unity built upon any other foundation cannot, therefore, be Christian unity; and "Let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon." The final or seventh item in Paul's plan for unity is,

#### THE UNITS OF UNION

*"In whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."* Wherever Paul went and preached, he built a church, a congregation of disciples of Christ; and he here refers to them as "each several building;" and each one of these local congregations "fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord," that is, each local congregation, properly built and set in order, is a unit in the "holy temple of the Lord," or church universal, which is made up of all congregations of Christians as integral parts. Each one of these congregations is made up of individual

Christians as integral parts, or as stated by Paul, "in whom ye (Christians) are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit;" or as stated by Peter, "Ye as living stones are built up a spiritual house." The individual Christians are, therefore, the units of construction in the local church, just as the individual congregation is the unit of construction in the church universal, or the holy temple of Christ. These two units, the individual congregation and the individual Christian, are the only units of construction in the New Testament church; and these units are, therefore, the only units of union in Christian unity. These units of union need to be clearly understood, because there has been much time wasted in efforts to unite larger religious units, or bodies, such as Convocations, Assemblies, Conferences, Presbyteries, Associations, Conventions, etc., all of which are unknown in the organization of the Apostolic church. They may be expediences of a divided church; but they cannot be made units of union in a united church. All such are denominational organizations that belong to a divided church, but can have no place or part as units of union in a united church. All such organizations will have to be dissolved, and all return to the simple polity of the New Testament church, which had no organization above the local congregation, before Christian unity, according to Paul's plan, can be realized. This does not mean the dissolution of organizations for Christian work, such as missionary and benevolent societies, which are agencies of the church and not ecclesiastical organizations. The church may employ any righteous agency, but must conform to the divine pattern in organization. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount," was the instruction given to Moses in building the Tabernacle; and the

writer of the letter to the Hebrews enjoins the same upon the builders of the church. In fact, denominationalism with all its machinery, paraphernalia and language is the price of Christian unity; and nothing less will secure it. Denominationalism is the offspring of division, so, of course, could not be brought over into a united church.

Furthermore, a return to the simple polity of the New Testament church makes Christian unity easy and feasible, because it is an easy matter to unite individual congregations and individual Christians; whereas it is almost impossible to unite the great denominational units. If we have to sit and wait for unity, until the great denominations decide and vote to unite with all others, we will be divided unto the end; but, if every individual congregation and Christian in a community could be made free and willing to act for themselves, Christian unity would be greatly facilitated. For instance, there are numbers of congregations and Christians in many communities today that want to unite, and would unite; but each is tied up to some greater ecclesiastical organization, and has to wait until these larger bodies act. Christian unity has practical meaning only with reference to the local congregations and individual Christians of a community. With reference to the congregation, it is a union of all congregations of disciples of Christ in a community; and with reference to the Christian it is a union of all Christians in the same. When the Christians of a community come together, and as individual units or "living stones" are organized into a church, they "are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit;" and "each several building, (thus) fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord," or becomes a unit in the united universal church of Christ. These two units, the congregation and the Christian, are the only

Scriptural units in Christian unity, so all efforts for unity ought, therefore, to be directed toward the union of these.

#### RECAPITULATION

To summarize Paul's plan for Christian unity, as each individual Christian and congregation, animated by the love of God that knows no alienation nor defeat, accept Christ as the common standard of authority, and thereby remove their differences, and become reconciled in one body through the cross, and thereby have a common access to the Father, and form a democratic brotherhood or church, built upon the foundation of the apostles and of the prophets, Christ Jesus being the chief cornerstone, they are prepared, according to Paul's plan, to enter into the unity of the one fold of Christ, for which Christ prayed and Paul worked; and, under these essential conditions of unity, they automatically enter into the same.

This is Paul's plan, so let no individual or denomination make claim to the same, but let all accept it, and unite by it. It is the only undenominational plan, because it was formed centuries before any of the modern denominations existed, so it has no denominational bias or sectarian associations to prejudice any one against it. It is also the only Scriptural plan, because all that is claimed for other plans is that they are only deductions from the Scriptures, while every step or item in the above plan was expressly prescribed verbatim by the divinely inspired apostle Paul. While we have analyzed and commented on the several items or steps in this plan, we were careful to add to or take nothing from it. The comments are ours; the plan is Paul's. Furthermore, it is the only truly catholic plan, the only plan that all can accept. It contains nothing more nor less than the final essential deposit of Christianity, as conceived and stated

by Paul, the master-builder of Christianity. No other plan offers a program that appeals to all communions. It is also the only practical plan, because no other plan has succeeded in uniting a divided church, while it successfully united all the sects of Paul's day, and maintained unity in the church for several hundred years; and it will do the same to-day, if it is only given a fair trial. Unity by this plan, of course, would be a drastic and far-reaching step on the part of the churches to-day—one that involves many denominational sacrifices. This is what makes all hesitate and draw back from such a union. To be sure, only by the sacrifice of everything sectarian and denominational, can Christian unity be realized, because unity, purchased at any less price, would be only a continuation, more or less, of sectarianism. Lastly, Paul's plan is the only perfect plan, lacking nothing necessary to unite the whole Christian world, except to be accepted and tried. So therefore let us all accept it, and unite upon it.

## IX

### THE DYNAMIC FOR UNITY

**F**OR this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,—if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to you ward; how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel, whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power. Unto me, who am less than least of the saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God, who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him. Wherefore I ask that ye may not faint at my tribulations for you, which are your glory.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.” 3:1-21.

In the above paragraphs Paul sets out at some length *the dynamic for Christian unity*, which is *Christian prayer*. Every one realizes the greatness of the task of uniting the church. In fact, many look upon it as impossible; and even those who know most about the situation and problem, and are working for the solution of the same, admit that it is a stupendous undertaking, and there are yet mountains of difficulties and obstacles in the way to be removed before Christian unity can come. Furthermore, when we consider the high plain and strict requirements of Paul's plan for unity, as set forth in the preceding paragraph, the task grows upon us, until we are ready to say it can never be. It is, indeed, a great task, and no one knew this better than the Apostle Paul. He knew that nothing could accomplish it except the very power, or dynamite of God, which is Christian prayer. Christian prayer is the only power or dynamic in the hands of man that can break down all the walls of opposition, and blow up and level down all the mountains of difficulties in the way.

The church to-day does not seem to realize the power of Christian prayer. It brings one into direct touch with God, who is omnipotent power. It is the spiritual medium or connection between God and man, connecting man with the great power-house of God. Wherefore, Paul writes, "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me." This was his approach to all the great tasks which he undertook and accomplished, the greatest of which was no doubt the unity of the church. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father," he writes in the beginning of his prayer for Christian unity; and he devotes more space to prayer than to any other subject, which shows the importance and value attached to prayer in his plan for Christian unity; and he prayed his longest

recorded prayer, vs. 14-21, for Christian unity, which is also significant. It is also a significant fact that Jesus Christ our Lord *prayed* for the unity of His disciples. He did not command it; nor did He argue for it; but He simply prayed for it. Jno. 17:20-21. Both Christ and Paul approached the problems of Christian evangelization and unity on their knees, and so commanded his followers, saying, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his vineyard," "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that Thou didst send me."

Prayer is the golden key that unlocks the doors for the Christian evangelization of the world, and opens up the way for the unity of all the disciples of Christ. Wherefore, Paul never went forth upon his missions of evangelizing and uniting the world without this miraculous key. He trusted nothing else to lead him to victory. He knew the power of the Gospel and the drawing influence of the church, which, as he shows in this letter, is all-sufficient in plan and purpose, head and terms of entrance to bring together and unite all; and he unfolds a practical plan for the unity of the church; yet he realized that prayer was the only power that could bring this about. In other words, there must be a great dynamic from within to execute the above plans and purposes of the church, which is prayer; and in no other way can the world be wrought to Christ and unity in him. We have tried debates and discussions, but have made little progress in evangelizing and uniting the world. You can not argue people into Christ and unity, but you can pray them into the same. So therefore Paul writes,

“For this cause,” giving at length his reasons for prayer, and then offered a prayer in behalf of unity such as never before nor since was uttered by man. It is a marvel of wisdom and devotion, and lifts one up into the mysteries, devotions and glories of the eternal Father. It calls out all that is highest and best in man, and opens up the great possibilities and reaches of the soul in its quest of God through Jesus Christ. This prayer and his reasons for prayer let us now consider.

The first reason Paul gives for his praying is “the grace of God.” Paul had received not only the goodness of God in general that is poured out upon the whole race; but also a special “dispensation of that grace of God was given me to you ward,” in that he was the divinely chosen apostle to the Gentiles, and received by direct revelation “the mystery of Christ, \* \* \* the Gospel, whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of that grace which was given me according to the working of his power.” Accordingly, whenever Paul thought thus of God’s goodness to him, it brought him to his knees. No one can fully realize the goodness of God without praying; but only the appreciative grateful souls like Paul seem to realize what God has done for them.

Another reason for Paul’s praying was his weakness and insignificance. “Unto me, *who am less than the least of all the saints*, was this grace given.” Paul, like all truly great souls, realized his littleness and weakness, his utter dependence upon God, which brought him to his knees before God, the giver of all blessings. This explains these enigmatic words in another letter, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly will I therefore glory in my weaknesses, \* \* \* for when I am weak, then am I

strong." The realization of his weakness brought him in prayer to God, who was his strength; and then he was strong. This gave him confidence to undertake great things for Christ, "in whom we have boldness and confidence through our faith in him," as he states it. Paul realized his weakness and need of divine strength in working for the unity of the church, so he prayed a fervent, wonderful prayer in behalf of unity, which contains many important lessons for those that are working toward the solution of this problem.

Note first that he prays "unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named." God is the universal Father, the head of all the families of earth, so all belong to one family, and ought, therefore to be one. There is nothing worse than a divided family; and for the great family of God to be divided is the greatest injury that can befall the cause of Christ.

He prays first "that ye be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." Paul, realizing the greatness of the task of uniting the church, knew that great spiritual strength would be required to accomplish so great a work. It is a Herculean task; and only strong men need to undertake it. However, it is encouraging to know that the strong men in every communion are working at the task; and, if the whole church would join with Paul in praying that they be given "a mighty increase in strength," the thing can and will be done.

Next he prays "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." The indwelling of Christ in the hearts of Christians is an essential to unity, because it is an easy matter to unite people that really have Christ in their hearts. There are so many people in the church, to whom Christ and Christianity is a mere theory, a system of doctrine or philosophy, and in whom there is

no real indwelling of Christ through faith, that unity is made difficult. Christianity is not a system of moral and religious philosophy but a spiritual indwelling life, the Christ-life, the germ of which is planted in the heart through faith in Christ thus, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God;" and, when he is "born of the water and the Spirit," he is "a new creature,"—a new living religious being that grows and develops in the heart and life of man. Without this Christ-life in the heart, one cannot be a real living Christian, ("He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.") Christian unity has no meaning with reference to the latter; and it is futile to undertake to unite such people. In fact, these are the very people in the church that cause trouble and division; while on the other hand the people that cause little or no trouble in the church are those that have Christ in their hearts, and live the Christ-life; and it is an easy matter to unite and keep united all those that have Christ dwelling in their hearts and reigning over their lives. Christian unity is, therefore, a matter largely of making real Christians out of people; and then Christian unity will come of itself.

Paul's next petition in his prayer is, that they be "rooted and grounded in love." This is a far step toward unity, because, when people are "rooted and grounded in love," they are prepared to unite with all Christians. Love is the motive passion that makes Christian unity possible; and the fervent heat of true Christian love is the only influence that can melt and unite human hearts in a lasting bond of unity. So then, the stronger the passion and the warmer the flame the easier and more lasting the unity. Wherefore Paul prays for much and strong love, that they be rooted and grounded in love,

that they grow up out of love as plants out of the soil, and that love be of their very nature and being as the plants are of the soil, from which they spring. When love is thus in the hearts and lives of Christians, they will gladly and naturally unite.

Lastly, Paul prays that they "be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,"—in other words, that they be strong enough and big enough to take in the vision of the love of God. When people get this vision clearly in their minds and hearts, that God's love is immeasurable and includes the whole redeemed world and not the little sect alone, of which they are members, then they will follow this vision into the one fold of all God's people. However, only big and strong men are able to apprehend thus the vision of God's love and to know the love of Christ which is beyond human comprehension. This vision staggers and overwhelms the ordinary soul in its climb toward God. Many of us will have to grow into bigger and stronger souls, before we can take it in, and follow its leadings toward Christian unity. Christian unity is, therefore, a matter of making little souls into big souls,—big enough to take in God and all his people. How big does God expect Christians to become? Paul says, "filled unto all the fullness of God." But this is beyond the possible for man's development. Notice, however, that Paul says, "*be* filled." Man can not fill himself to this extent; but God can; so, if man will open his heart and soul to God, and place his soul in the hands of Jesus Christ, the soul has infinite possibilities. John says, "It doth not appear what we shall be." At any rate, man reaches his highest development in contact with other souls; and the larger the fellow-

ship the larger the growth of the soul. This is why sectarianism produces little souls, and unity big souls. God, therefore, planned "one fold and one Shepherd" for his people, that "they may go in and out, and find pasture for their souls," and grow "into the fullness of God."

In concluding his prayer Paul seemed to realize that many would think that he had asked for too much, even the impossible; but he assures us that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,"—even more than he had asked for or thought of. God's arm is not shortened; nor is the soul that is committed to Jesus Christ limited in its reaches toward God.

But God does not propose to do all this, or, in fact, anything for man without man's co-operation. What He does is "according to the power *that worketh in us.*" We cannot sit idle with folded hands, and expect God to do wonders in us and for us, because He works according to and through the power that is in us. In other words He uses the powers of men and women to do His work; and through Jesus Christ He leads all those that commit themselves by prayer to Him into marvelous victories and wonderful achievements. "In all these things ye are more than conquerors through him that loved us." "And greater works than these (the works of Christ) shall ye do; because I go unto the Father." "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Thus Jesus Christ and the Father co-operates with his disciples to do the will of God. So "We are workers together with God," says Paul; and God "is able to do exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think;" and He will do wonders through us, if only we pray and work.

Paul herein gives us the secret to the solution of the

problem of Christian unity and every other great work that is assigned the disciples of Christ. Accordingly, Christian unity will come, when all Christians begin to pray and work for the same; and Paul tells us, furthermore, that it will come "*in the church and in Christ Jesus*"—"unto him be the glory *in the church and in Christ Jesus* unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen." In no other institution, such as the Y. M. C. A. or Knights of Columbus, etc., can Christian unity be realized; and in no other person, such as Mrs. Eddy, Pastor Russell, etc., can it be realized. It must be a unity *in and of the church and in and of Jesus Christ*; and this, too, "unto all generations for ever and ever."

Thus Paul concludes the first half of his letter, setting forth *the church for all*. He has shown it to be all-sufficient in plan and purpose, in head and in terms of entrance for all, has outlined a complete, practicable plan for the unity of the same, and has given the key to the realization of this unity, which is prayer. The church as herein conceived and set forth is a church for all,—a truly catholic cosmopolitan church. This was the ideal for the church as conceived by God and executed by Paul, the wise master-builder of the church. Christ in founding this church and Paul in building it rose above their religious and racial environment, and organized a church for all ages and races of men,—a church that meets all the needs of the universal man. It contains nothing sectarian, racial or national, and appeals to all alike. However, on account of division it has been sectarianized, and in some places nationalized, so it is the task of the church to-day to restore its original universality and unity; and Paul in this letter has opened up the way.

PART II  
ALL FOR THE CHURCH  
EPH. 4-6



## X

### CHARACTER

**W**ITH chapter three Paul closes the first part of his letter, setting forth *The Church For All*; and with chapter four he begins the last part, which he devotes to the people that make up *The Church For All*. Having set forth *The Church For All*, he completes his letter with an exposition of the complementary theme, *All For The Church*. Having shown that the church of Christ is for all and is all-sufficient in all respects, he shows next that all must be for the church, which completes the ideal for the church.

*The Church For All*, as conceived and set forth by Paul in the first part of his letter is a high ideal; but, had he stopped here, such a church would have been weak, worthless and selfish. To be *in the church* and not *for the church* weakens and degrades the church. In fact, herein lie the weakness and selfishness of the church to-day. There are so many *in the church* that are not *for the church* that it is burdened with its own weight, and all such members look upon the church as existing for them, which is religious selfishness. Weakness and selfishness are the inevitable results of being in the church and not for the church. Strength is not gained through numbers, but efforts; nor is efficiency secured by enlisting a multitude but by leading those enlisted into active service. It is one thing to be in the church and another to be for the church. Paul required both in his ideal for the church. He set forth the church for all, and then

required all to be for the church, which he makes the theme of the latter half of his letter.

However, few people in the church seem to realize that they must be for the church. Many have been in the church for years, and have been regular attendants upon the services of the same; but they have seldom or never done anything for the church; they have never realized the active practical side of church membership. Unless people are for the church, it is useless to be in the church. Church membership in and of itself is worthless and amounts to nothing, unless it goes further and proves to be actively for the church. Wherefore Paul teaches that all in the church must be for the church, which is the theme of the last part of his letter.

This theme, *All For The Church*, like the preceding theme, *The Church For All*, is a logical part of the major theme of the Ephesian Letter, Christian Unity; and it is so treated by Paul. The two themes are complementary halves of the major theme, Christian unity. *The Church For All* is an essential prerequisite to unity; and *All For The Church* is the practical realization of the same. Without the latter Christian unity would be a mere theory. The former is an essential means to the latter; and each is an essential to Christian unity. Without *a church for all* Christian unity would be impossible; and without *all being for the church* it would be stagnant, impractical and worthless. A church with everybody in it with no one for the church would be static and stagnant; and such a unity would not be Christian unity. There is such a unity of waters in the Dead Sea,—a unity of inactivity and death; while on the other hand there is a unity of waters in the Sea of Galilee,—a unity of activity and life. Such is Christian unity,—a unity of Christian lives and characters in ceaseless activity and

life, a great stream of redeemed humanity flowing on toward the Sea of Eternal Life. This active realization of Christian unity Paul sets forth in the latter half of his letter, which we now propose to study. He teaches that all must be for the church, and prescribes the essential respects in which everyone must be for the church, the first of which is *Character*.

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.” 4:1-3.

Paul in the above enjoins upon all members of the church “lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, love, diligence and peace,” which are distinctively Christian traits of character,—the first essential respect in which all must be for the church. All must possess or develop a character that will be for the church and not against the church; and Paul prescribes the above as the kind of character that will be for the church. Without a character “worthy of the calling wherewith they were called” the church would be stultified and brought into disrepute and reproach, because the church stands first of all for Christian character; and all that come into the church must, therefore, be true to this high calling. No greater injury and betrayal can befall the church than to be placed in a false light before the world by the unworthy characters of professed members. Christians are “epistles of Christ, known and read of all men,” so all, therefore, must see to it that their lives and characters properly and truly represent and portray Christ and his church, and are thereby for the same.

Paul, therefore, prescribed character as the first essential respect in which all must be for the church; and in

so doing he followed the example and teaching of Christ Himself, who gave character the primacy over everything in ethics and religion. According to Christ character was of paramount and superlative importance, and was the first essential requirement of those who would enter His kingdom. He rejected in strong words those who sought to enter without a becoming character. To the self-righteous corrupt Scribes and Pharisees, who posed as religious leaders, he spoke his severest words. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are likened unto whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Here were men that had everything except character; but according to Christ without this they were despicable. Christ in all His teaching and conduct declared for the sovereignty of character, and founded His kingdom upon character; and to have admitted people without worthy characters into His kingdom and church would have been suicidal for His cause. In founding His kingdom on the sovereignty of character He gave radiant and conclusive proof of His wisdom and divinity; and the rapid spread and progress and the universal appeal of this kingdom to all men of all ages and races have fully confirmed the wisdom of this foundation.

Christ Jesus not only declared for the sovereignty of character and founded His kingdom upon the same, but

He revealed a new and definite type of character for His followers. In delivering the constitution or manifesto of Christianity in His Sermon on the Mount He gave first the following traits of character, namely, humility, patience, meekness, righteousness, mercy, purity, peace, and loyalty to conscience as constituent parts of Christian character. Heretofore many of these traits had not been looked upon as even desirable, much less being worthy of being put into the foundation of a new kingdom and religion; but Christ even made them sources of happiness. Such a character and such happiness were never thought of before; and to make them the foundation of a new kingdom and religion was inconceivable to the people of that day with their standards and prepossessions. No such kingdom was ever before conceived and built; but it is the most real and most powerful kingdom in the world to-day; and it has been so almost from the beginning, because it was founded upon character which is the source of all true happiness.

Accordingly, Christ in his teaching spent much time in emphasizing and elaborating Christian character, which he put into the foundation of Christianity. He analyzed it, illustrated it, and revealed it in every possible way. He incarnated it in Himself; and inspired His biographers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, to record it for all future ages; and it has come down to us as the blessed heritage of the race. Also those sent out under the great commission likewise taught it. Paul embodied and revealed it in almost every sermon and letter that he wrote. According to his statement above from his letter to the Ephesians, Christian character consists of:

- (1) "*All lowliness,*"—deep and genuine humility that is the sure mark of a great soul. Every truly great soul realizes his human limitations,

and assumes a lowly attitude of mind and body; but the little soul that is unable to see anything greater than himself is proud and haughty.

- (2) "*Meekness*,"—that inner trait of the soul that shuns arrogance and presumption. It is the inner trait of which lowliness is the outer.
- (3) "*Long-suffering*,"—the patience that bears up under all the burdens and responsibilities of life with a fortitude that does not wince nor whine.
- (4) "*Forbearing*,"—that rare trait of character that can bear and forgive personal offences and injuries.
- (5) "*Love*,"—that greatest of traits without which a man is nothing, which Paul sets forth in I Cor. 13.
- (6) "*Diligence*,"—that energy of body and soul that keeps one active "about the Father's business."
- (7) "*Peace*,"—that perfect poise of the soul that comes from the adjustment of the inner man to the stress of all things outward, and manifests itself by maintaining peace with self and all others.

The above seven traits are distinctively Christian, because they are the distinctive traits in the character of Christ.

In addition to the above statement of Christian character, Paul gives similar statements in his other letters. To the Corinthians he writes, "Now abideth *faith, hope* and *love*, these three; and the greatest of these is *love*." To the Galatians, "The fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control*, against such there is no law." To

the Philippians, "If there is therefore any *exhortation* in Christ, if any *consolation* of love, if any *fellowship* of the Spirit, if any *tender mercies* and *compassions*, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord (*agreeableness*); doing nothing through faction or through vainglory (*peaceful humility*), but in *lowliness of mind* each counting the other better than himself (*modesty*); not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you to the things of others (*altruism*). Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant (*sacrifice*). \* \* \* Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honourable*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are of *good report*; if there be any *virtue*, if there be any *praise*, think on these things." Phil. 2:1-7; 4:8.

Peter also gives an analysis and statement of Christian character in his letters as follows: "Finally, be ye all *like-minded*, *compassionate*, *loving* as brethren, *tender-hearted*, *humble-minded*; *not rendering evil for evil*, or *reviling for reviling*; but contrariwise *blessing* \* \* \*. Let him *refrain his tongue from evil*, and his lips that they *speak no guile*: And let him *turn away from evil*, and *do good*; let him *seek peace*, and *pursue it*." I Pet. 3:8-11. "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all *diligence*, in your *faith* supply *virtue*; and in your *virtue* *knowledge*; and in your *knowledge* *self-control*; and in your *self-control* *patience*; and in your *patience* *godliness*; and in your *godliness* *brotherly kindness*; and in your *brotherly kindness* *love*." 2 Pet. 1:5-7.

As to the content or constituent traits of Christian character, the above passages are clear and definite; and all these traits are so well known to-day that they scarcely need any further definition, elaboration or comment. They are analytically and synthetically stated in the Scriptures, illustrated in the lives of Christians, and incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the ideal character for all ages and races of men. Any one, therefore, that knows Him knows Christian character. The inspired teachers and writers have revealed not only what Christian character is, but how it may be acquired. Paul says, "Be not fashioned according to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." And again, "We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." Furthermore Peter says, "In your faith *supply* virtue."

The words "transform" and "supply," indicate a process of growth and development. "Transform" is a sculptor's term, showing that we are "as clay in the potter's hands," moulded into the likeness of the ideal character, Jesus the Christ, as we behold His glory; and "supply" is a theatrical word, expressing the part that the person plays in character building. He furnishes or builds into his character the Christian traits, and each grows out of the other. It is a development or unfolding from within outward such as the growth of a tree. It is not wholly a gift but a growth where the person is the cultivator of the Christian graces. Wherefore Peter says, "Grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ;" and "As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk of the word, which is without guile, that ye

may grow thereby unto salvation." It is a natural normal growth of the soul under the influence and teaching of Christian ideals.

While Christian character is a natural progressive growth, it begins in regeneration, which differentiates it from mere morality and ethical culture. It is the living fruit of "a new life;" and no artificial character and life, however beautiful, is Christian. Like all living growth, it begins in birth. "Except one be born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," said Jesus to all that desire to become Christian in life and character. Only a regenerate life and character can stand the strain and stress of this world, and lift the degraded outcasts of society up out of the depths of sin. The skeptical Gibbon paid a great tribute to Christian character in the following: "The friends of Christianity may acknowledge without a blush, that many of the most eminent saints had been before their baptism the most abandoned sinners. \* \* \* Tertullian, with an honest pride, could boast that very few Christians had suffered by the hand of the executioner, except on account of their religion. \* \* \* It is a very honourable circumstance for the morals of primitive Christians, that even their faults, or rather errors, were derived from an excess of virtue."

During the days of persecution of the early church, it was Christian character that enabled Christians to stand for the church in the midst of the horrible fiery trials of that day. "Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might receive a better resurrection; and others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain.

with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth." Only the strongest and most stalwart character could have passed through such trials without breaking down, which is sufficient to show that Christian character is not only ethically ideal but truly heroic. This virtuous heroic character was the wonder and admiration of the world, so that the blood of martyrs became the seed of the kingdom. No one could behold such a character without admiring and embracing it; and thus the people were brought to the Author of this new and living type of character, Jesus the Saviour. True Christian character has always been the strongest apologetic for Christianity; and in no way can one be more effectively for Christ and His church than in developing and manifesting a character that is truly Christian.

Consequently, Christian character became the distinguishing trait and test of a Christian, and was the bond of unity between the followers of Christ. Subjectively Christian unity is a union of like characters, formed and fashioned after Christ as the ideal, or of kindred spirits that are born of the Spirit of Christ; and there is no unity so close and binding as the affinity of united souls. The problem of Christian unity is, therefore, a matter of planting and developing Christian character in the hearts and lives of the members of the church, or in other words of getting all to be for the church in character. When all are of one character, they are naturally, that is, psychologically and spiritually, drawn and tied to each other; and this inner tie of souls in Christ is strong and lasting. This is the first bond of Christian unity; and, unless people are thus bound together by things within, it is useless

to try to bind them by things without. So Paul, therefore, provided first for this inner tie of character, and required all to be for the church in this essential respect. All must not only theoretically accept and approve of the Christian graces, but must actually possess and cultivate the same in their hearts and lives; and, when this is done by all, all will come into unity as naturally and surely as "birds of a feather flock together."

## XI

### DOCTRINE

**T**HERE is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." 4:4-6.

The above is Paul's statement of the essential doctrines, which constitute the second essential respect, in which all must be for the church. Paul puts character first, and emphasizes it accordingly; and he follows his statement of the essential traits of Christian character with a statement of the essential doctrines of the church, for which all must stand. He places doctrine next to and alongside of character. We have set forth in the preceding chapter Christian character as the first essential respect, in which all must be for the church; and we now come to the study of the second essential, Christian doctrine, which Paul states in the above.

Character and doctrine are vitally related and connected, the one being largely determined by the other. Doctrine, taught and believed, forms character, or, in other words, what one believes and teaches determines largely what he is. You cannot divorce character and doctrine, because they are psychologically and Scripturally united. The one can not develop without the other; and, when one is emphasized to the neglect of the other, each is weakened. Paul placed them together; and they must be kept together in the minds and hearts of the members of the church as co-ordinate essentials to the progress and unity of the church.

However, there is a prejudice in the minds of many to-day against doctrine as an essential of Christianity. This is doubtless due to an over-emphasis of doctrine in the past. During the nineteenth century and for many preceding centuries doctrine was the major theme in the teaching and preaching of the religious leaders. Orthodoxy in doctrine was the test of discipleship; and conformity to dogma was the essential requirement of church membership. Many were persecuted, and a few martyred, because of their refusal to subscribe to the dogmas of the various sects in the church. Character was not emphasized; and the moral and ethical requirements were lax. But to-day the pendulum has swung to the opposite extreme of emphasizing character to the neglect of doctrine. The tendency is to preach and require Christian character, and say little or nothing about Christian doctrine. "It matters little what you believe and teach, but much what you are and do," is a popular tenet to-day. The greatest laxity and the broadest liberty are granted with reference to everything doctrinal; and religious dogma is scoffed by many that profess to be Christian preachers and teachers.

While orthodoxy in character is not to be depreciated, yet orthodoxy in doctrine is not to be ignored, according to the inspired authorities of the New Testament, who stress the importance of not only Christian character but Christian doctrine as well in all their teaching and preaching. The following passages show what importance Christ and His Apostles attached to doctrine. "Jesus therefore answered them and said, My teaching is not mine, but His that sent me." "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away." "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this sinful and adulterous generation, the Son of man also

shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; and he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath the Father and the Son." 2 Jno. 9-10. "If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not unto sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words." I Tim. 6: 3-5. "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables." II Tim. 3: 16 to 4: 4. These statements from Christ, John and Paul show clearly what importance they attached to the true sound doctrine. They did not insist on Christian character any more emphatically than they did upon Christian doctrine. They treated both as co-ordinate essentials, and required all others to do the same.

In fact, Christ established his religion through teaching. "He went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." He was first of all a teacher; and his doctrine was as vital and essential to his religion as seed is to vegetation.

In the parable of the Sower the Son of Man is the sower, and his words are the seeds of the kingdom; and in the parable of the Tares he declares all other seed to be tares. All seed produces true to its kind, consequently the need of great care as to the kind of seed we sow. This is as true in the spiritual realm as it is in the physical. For this reason Christ and Paul left the above emphatic words on the true sound doctrine, which all are required to teach. You cannot have a lasting living religion without a vitalizing doctrine from which it springs and grows. To this end Christ came to earth to reveal and teach this essential doctrine; and after his departure he sent the Holy Spirit to "teach the Apostles and bring to their remembrance all things that he had taught them." Accordingly, they were sent out under the commission of teachers and preachers, Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; and their teaching is bound upon all those that are subjects of the Gospel, or Christian salvation. Matt. 16:19. Anyone, therefore, that rejects or esteems lightly this doctrine as revealed through Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Apostles is a false teacher and preacher of Christianity, and denies the essential faith of the same. This doctrine is the only true and effective propaganda for Christianity. No new interpretations or restatements of it will do. It needs only to be taught "as it is written" to win disciples; and any Christian teacher or preacher that is silent or "puts on the soft pedal" in his preaching on this doctrine is false to the commission under which he preaches. On the other hand, this does not mean that one must be offensively dogmatic. Blatant dogmatism is as false to this doctrine as purposed silence. When one teaches plainly and kindly just what Christ and the Apostles taught, he is only dogmatic as they were dogmatic. He

is truly dogmatic, when he is silent on this teaching, and endeavours to teach his own views and theories.

All the divinely inspired teachers and preachers spoke and wrote clearly and definitely on the fundamental doctrines of the church. Paul, "the master-builder" of the church and the chief theologian among the Apostles was the expositor of these doctrines, which he summarizes in the text of this chapter. The seven "one" things, as stated by him, constitute the essential deposit of Christian doctrine, for which all in the church must stand. Many in the church to-day do not even know what these doctrines are, much less stand for them. In recent years there has been so little emphasis of these doctrines that many of the members of the church have no religious convictions. They are religiously spineless. They are religious "children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine," whom Paul exhorts to become "full-grown men" truly and soundly indoctrinated with Christian teaching; they are like the Athenians, whom Paul found to be mere philosophic epicureans, tasting of every "new thing" in religion and accepting none. They have not been taught the fundamental doctrines of the church or any other religious teaching except a little philosophic liberalism that is close to skepticism. As a result the church to-day is filled with people that have no religious convictions. Religiously they do not stand for anything. They need to be taught and indoctrinated with Christian truth that they may know and stand for the essential doctrines of the church, the first of which, according to Paul, is

#### ONE BODY

"There is one body," which, he says, is the church, 2:22-23. The church itself as the one body of Christ

is an essential doctrine of the church. Paul mentions this first, not because it is the most important, but because the church is the major theme of his letter, and logically comes first in his statement of the essential doctrines of the church. Paul states this doctrine in regard to the church in more detail in his letters to the Romans and the Corinthians. Rom. 12:4-5; I Cor. 12:12-26. The church is fundamental and essential to Christianity according to the Scriptures; and the whole history of the church attests the same. Christianity never would have gotten beyond Jerusalem without the organized church. It would have died still-born. In fact, no religion can exist without some organized active body or institution to represent and propagate it. This has been the essential function of the church, which is vital to Christ's religion. To this end Christ said, "I will build my church." Anyone, therefore, that regards the church lightly, or looks upon it as non-essential to Christianity, either does not understand the church, or is an enemy of the same. God planned the church "before the foundation of the world," which makes everything in the world secondary and contributory to the church; and "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." This is heaven's estimate of the church; and man, for whom it was planned and built, ought to esteem it even more highly. Whenever anyone fails to stand for the church, or is indifferent toward it, it is a sure evidence of his enmity to or disbelief in the same. "He that is not for me is against me," is true of the church.

While Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, it is not an invisible kingdom, as some seem to think. The church is the visible organized form of the kingdom, established for Christian work and worship; and Paul says, "There is *one* body," which excludes all other bodies that

profess to do the work and worship of the church. In the realm of religion the church has no rival institutions, or should have none according to Paul. Any other body or institution that aspires to do the work and worship of the church is, therefore, a usurper and an enemy to the church. "This is religious bigotry," say some. No. It is mere consistency. Christianity could not be what it professes to be, and recognize the legitimacy of other religious bodies. Christianity claims to be the only true religion; and, if it is, there must be one authorized body to represent it. But many other bodies claim to be Christian. Yes; but they are not divinely authorized as the church. "There is *one* (divinely authorized) body," which is the church. The church is the only institution planned by God and built by His Son; and no other institution has the authority and right to represent Them. Every member of the church, therefore, must stand for this "one body," which is the church, and be content to work and worship in it, and endeavour to get all others to do the same.

But where can this "one body," of which Paul speaks, be found to-day? The church has suffered so many divisions from within, it is difficult to find one's way back to this original body of Christ or to trace it down to the present. On account of the great multiplicity of religious bodies to-day, and all claiming to be Christian, this "one body" has been lost sight of; and Paul's doctrine of "one body" has been discredited; yet this does not disprove the doctrine nor justify one in rejecting the same. The very fact that the church has been divided is proof of its original unity; and the incompleteness of the divided parts of the church is proof of the need of the unity to-day. While the church is divided, nevertheless Paul's doctrine on the unity of the same is still true,

and should be accepted by all. Whenever we reject this doctrine, or fail to stand for it, and admit the legitimacy of a multiplicity of bodies, such as we have to-day, we become apologists for division and denominationalism, which Paul severely condemned, and which is the curse of the church to-day. One cannot stand for both denominationalism and Paul's doctrine, "There is one body," because they are contradictory. To say that the various denominations are "the members" of the "one body" of Christ is Scripturally untenable, because Christ and Paul made it clear that the individual disciples are "the members" of his body. John 15:1-6; I Cor. 12:12-26. In fact, there is no suggestion of denominationalism in the New Testament; and every form of division is condemned. I Cor. 1:10-13; Gal. 6:19-20. "The church, which is the body of Christ," does not admit of legitimate division any more than the human body; and division results in weakness and death in each alike. The only remedy for this weakness and threatened death of the church from division is a restoration of the original unity of the body of Christ.

This doctrine of the "one body" of Christ has a vital bearing on the problem of unity in the church to-day. Unless the members of the church accept this doctrine, and endeavour to bring the church to conform to the same, there is no hope for Christian unity; while on the other hand, if they do accept it, and endeavour to realize it, Christian unity is highly probable. The people need to be pointed away from the denominations that clamour for prestige and dominion on all sides back to the original "one body" of Christ and to be enlisted in an effort to return to the same; and Christian unity will be greatly advanced thereby.

## ONE SPIRIT

“There is one Spirit,”—the Holy Spirit of God. There is no doctrine more vital and fundamental in Christian teaching than that regarding the Holy Spirit. To deny or even question His power and authority is the unpardonable sin according to Christ; and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit are manifest in the world from the beginning to the end. The Bible begins with an account of the work of the Spirit of God in creation, and closes with the Spirit’s invitation to all to come and partake of the eternal things of God. Rev. 22:17. The Bible is a historical record of the doings of the Holy Spirit in the life of man. Men filled with the Holy Spirit have spoken and wrought for God in the upbuilding of the world. Christ received the Holy Spirit at his baptism, and through the same did the mighty works of God. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures are “spirit-filled” and “spirit-breathed,” and are in substance the teaching of the Holy Spirit. “God revealed them through the Spirit,” says Paul. In fact, Christianity is differentiated from all other religions by the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, so the doctrine of the one Spirit is, therefore, vital and essential.

There have been wide differences in doctrine on the Holy Spirit. We touch here the borderland of the unknown and mysterious; and the tendency is to theorize and speculate, which leads to irreconcilable differences. Accordingly, there have been much speculating and wide differing as to the personality, work, indwelling, operation, etc., of the Holy Spirit. While the Bible contains much teaching regarding these functions of the Spirit, some of which, like the teaching of Paul according to Peter, is hard to comprehend; yet Paul’s statement, “There is one Spirit,” is clear and comprehensive, and

is sufficient for agreement and unity at this point. This is Paul's summary of Christian doctrine with reference to the Spirit; and for all that accept the Holy Spirit as the one Spirit of God there is common ground and hope of unity.

Paul does not mean, of course, that there is only one Spirit, because the world is full of spirits both good and evil, but that relatively and comparatively there is *one* Spirit. There is no spirit that can be classed and compared with the Holy Spirit. In all respects and relationships the Spirit of God is supreme, or "one."

For instance, "There is one Spirit" of *power*. Spirit is more powerful than physical force or anything else in the world. It dominates matter, and rules the world. For this reason man was given dominion over the world and everything in it. This power often makes man proud, boastful and domineering, as it did Pilate; and he needs to be told, "Thou wouldst have no power, except it were given thee from above." All power is originally from the Spirit of God, who is omnipotent, so any power that man may possess is merely a delegated power. The Spirit of God is the *one* Spirit of power. Accordingly, those to whom the Holy Spirit was especially given were endowed with great power that manifested itself in "signs and wonders and by manifold powers and by gifts of the Holy Spirit." There is no other spirit that can give power, and is the source of power. There is *one* Spirit of power,—the Spirit of God.

Again, "There is one Spirit" of *truth*. Jesus emphasized this in His promise of the Holy Spirit. "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth: ye know him; for he abideth with you,

and shall be in you. \* \* \* But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said unto you." "However, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth; \* \* \* and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." In these days of many spirits that pose as revealers of truth there is a need of heeding John's admonition, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus in the flesh is not of God; and this is the spirit of the Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already." The standards of truth to-day have become so lax and liberal that almost anything with a show or semblance of truth passes as true irregardless of the spirit from whom it comes. Furthermore, many, like Pilate, with no standard of truth, flippantly and cynically ask, "What is truth?" without stopping to consider the question honestly and seriously. The only true and reliable answer to this question that has ever been given is Christ's answer, "Thy (God's) word is truth;" and the only authorized revealer and teacher of God's word is the Holy Spirit, who was sent to teach and guide the Apostles into all truth. Therefore Paul says, "There is one Spirit" of truth, the Holy Spirit of God.

Also, "There is one Spirit" of *holiness*. The Spirit of God is called the Holy Spirit, because absolutely there is but one Spirit of holiness. Other spirits are relatively holy in a more or less degree; but the Spirit of God is absolutely holy. "None is good, save one, even God,"

said Jesus. Perfect goodness or holiness belongs to God alone; and in this respect there is one Spirit of holiness. "There is one Spirit" of power, of truth, of holiness, etc., which, according to Paul, is an essential tenet of Christian doctrine, for which all must stand. The next is

### ONE HOPE

"Even as ye are called in *one hope* of your calling." There is one hope, which Paul says is "the hope of eternal life." The resurrection through Christ and eternal life with the Father is the star of hope that shone dimly in the ages before Christ; but, after Christ came and "brought life and immortality to life through the gospel," it became "the bright morning star" leading the children of God out of the darkness of doubt and death into the day of eternal life. Without this hope, Paul says, Christianity is "false" and "vain," and "we are of all men most pitiable." There is no tenet more vital and essential to Christianity than this hope of the resurrection through Christ and eternal life with the Father. This is "the hope of salvation," which gleams on the countenance of Christians like a shining "helmet," and is "an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil." Every other hope of man ends this side of the veil of the great beyond; but the Christian's hope lights the way "through the valley of the shadow of death," and leads out into the golden glories of the eternal home of the soul. This is the "one hope" of the Christian's calling, for which Paul prays, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation, \* \* \* that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." These riches are

“unsearchable and past finding out;” but we can look forward to the same in confident hope; and “if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

But Christians need not only to know and look forward to this hope; but they need to stand for it. In this age of doubt concerning the life to come, this hope needs to be taught and defended, “being ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you.” This hope is the touchstone of infidelity and the divine seal of the children of God. There is no place in the church of Christ for the doubting and unbelieving. All in the church to-day like the martyrs of old must stand loyally by this hope and for the doctrine of the same. The next essential doctrine is,

#### ONE LORD

“There is one Lord,” the Lord Jesus Christ, who is “Lord of lords and King of kings.” The lordship of Jesus Christ in all the relationships of life is a fundamental doctrine of the New Testament; in fact, it is the distinctive teaching of Christianity. The lordship of Jesus was the principle item in the gospel, proclaimed by the angels, Luke 2:11, and formed the major theme of the sermons preached by the Apostles. See Acts of the Apostles. It is of the very essence of Christianity, and is distinctive of Christ’s religion.

In all the realms of being Christ is supreme Lord. He is supreme in the realm of intellect. No man ever thought and spake as He. He is supreme in the realm of character. “He is the fairest of ten thousand, and one altogether lovely.” “There is no beauty that you could desire him.” “He was tempted in all things as we, yet without sin.” Sinless perfection was an attribute

of Him alone. He is also supreme in rule, dominion, power and authority. "All authority in heaven and earth is given unto me," said Christ; and Paul wrote in the letter that we are studying, "God raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." The supremacy of Jesus Christ in the realm of religion was the major theme of all Paul's teaching and preaching.

There is no essential doctrine of the church that needs to be emphasized more to-day than the Lordship of Christ. He needs to be made the "one Lord" of life in reality and not in mere theory. The trouble with the religious world to-day is, it has many lords instead of one. Theoretically Jesus is Lord; but in reality some earthly ecclesiastic such as the Pope, Bishop, Pastor, Prophet, Priest, Editor, etc., is lord of the church. Whenever the word and rule of man or any body of men is exalted above or substituted for the word and will of Christ, the doctrine of the supreme Lordship of Christ is rejected. The claim of the Pope to be the earthly representative of Christ and the claim of Apostolic Succession by the College of Bishops have no Scriptural justification, but are in fact a virtual denial of the Lordship of Christ. "There is one Lord," says Christ, "not only in this world, but also in the world to come." It seems that some in Apostolic times were inclined to deny the Lordship of Christ "in the world to come;" whereas some to-day reject His Lordship "in this world;" but according to Paul, "There

is one Lord" both "in this world and the world to come." Next there is

### ONE FAITH

The doctrine of faith occupied a large place in the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. Such passages as the following show what importance they attached to faith: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." "According to thy faith be it unto thee." "Thy faith hath saved thee." "To him bear all the prophets witness that through his name every one that *believeth* on him shall receive remission of sins." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "For by grace are ye saved through faith."

In his letters to the Romans and Galatians Paul sets forth in detail the doctrine of faith in the Christian system of salvation; but in these letters he deals with faith in the abstract, or subjective faith; while in his statement above, "There is one faith," he speaks of objective faith, which has to do with the things to be believed, the creed. Excepting degree faith on its subjective side is the same in all; but on its objective side it varies with the things believed. With respect to the things to be believed Paul says, "There is one faith," one creed; and Jude adds that this creed was "once for all delivered unto the saints." This makes it fixed and unchangeable. The saints did not conceive or state it,—it was delivered to them; and the words, "once for all," forbid any restatement of it. The only faith, or creed, that fulfills these requirements is the statement of faith, or confession, of Peter, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." Of this creed Christ said to Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who

is in heaven." God first revealed this creed at Christ's baptism, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and again on the Mount of Transfiguration. As people became convinced of his divine Sonship, they confessed this creed; and we find it recorded many times in the New Testament. See Mat. 26:63-64; Jno. 2:27; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 10:43; 16:21, etc.

This divine creed is faith in a person, Jesus Christ, and consists of only one article of faith. While it is very brief and simple, yet it is broad and comprehensive in scope and profound in subject-matter. It is a condensed statement of Christian faith, and includes everything to be believed by a Christian. It implies faith in the living God of the Bible, and states a definite and specific faith in Jesus, who is the chief object of Christian faith. It requires faith in him as *the* Christ (not *a* Christ) and as *the* Son of God (not *a* Son of God). "The Christ" is, of course, the Christ of the Christian Scriptures, and "the Son of God" is the Son of God of the same. This Christ and this Son of God is clearly and definitely revealed in the Scriptures; and any one that rejects this account of Him rejects and denies "the one faith" of Christianity, which Paul prescribed as an essential doctrine of the church. He is revealed as begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, the divinely sent and inspired prophet like unto Moses, "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," crucified, buried, resurrected on the third day and ascended into heaven as the Advocate of man. While all this and more is stated and implied in the one article of faith, it needs no elaborated statement or interpretation by man or any assembly of men. This has given rise to the many creeds of Christendom, which have been divisive of the church. The only creed or statement of

faith that all Christians accept is the "one faith" of the Scriptures, namely, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." Any one that believes less than this is an infidel; and any one that believes more goes "beyond that which is written" and "delivered unto the saints." This is the "one faith," which Paul prescribed for all. Next there is

### ONE BAPTISM

For some reason there is a strong prejudice against baptism as an essential doctrine of the church, notwithstanding Paul's putting it in his statement of the seven "one" things, or essential doctrines. It is popularly classed to-day as a non-essential; and there is little said of it except in depreciation of its value and importance; but it was not so considered and treated by the authorities of the New Testament, as is evident from the following statements: "For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." "Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Except one be born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Jesus. "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "In the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water; which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism." Peter. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." Paul. Baptism was a vital doctrine in the teaching of Christ and His Apostles; and there is no subject more frequently mentioned by the New Testament writers. Paul classes baptism as "one" of the essential doctrines of the church, saying,

“There is one baptism,” so let us, therefore, so treat it, and find out what this “one baptism” is.

There are only two religious baptisms spoken of in the New Testament, one a baptism in water and the other a baptism in the Holy Spirit, Mark 1:8, so a choice must be made between these two baptisms as the “one baptism” to be taught and practised to-day. If one is chosen, the other must be discontinued in practice and teaching. Accordingly, the Quakers say that the “one baptism” is Holy Spirit baptism, and they do not teach and practice water baptism; but all other churches, so far as I know, teach and practice water baptism, which commits them to the view that the “one baptism” is water baptism, which, I think, is the baptism that Paul meant, for the following reasons: First, Holy Spirit baptism was for a specific time and purpose. There were but two instances of it in the Apostolic church,—on the day of Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius. On the day of Pentecost the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Christ’s promise to send the Holy Spirit to teach and guide them into all truth; and at the house of Cornelius the Gentiles were likewise baptized as the divine seal of their acceptance to God. One baptism was sufficient in each case for all time and races, so it passed, and thereafter there was, as Paul states, “one baptism,”—water baptism, which the Apostles continued to practice under Christ’s great commission, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” See Acts 11 to 28. Second, water baptism is the only way of carrying out the great commission, which was “unto the end of the world,” because it is the only baptism that can be practised and obeyed. No man can baptize in the Holy Spirit, or have himself baptized in

the same. This was administered from above; and those thus baptized were entirely passive. The Gentiles, who were baptized in the Holy Spirit at the house of Cornelius, were also baptized in water, Acts 10:47; and all alike were required to be baptized in water, which is Christian baptism, or the "one baptism," which was prescribed for teaching and practice in the church for all ages and races.

There is nothing, however, in the word "one" in favour or against any form of water baptism, either sprinkling, pouring or immersion. This is determined by the Scriptural meaning of the word "baptism" itself, which was not an issue in Paul's day; nor can it be among those that understand the Greek language, of which it is an untranslated word. All that know Greek know that the only form of baptism that the original meaning of the word admits is immersion; and, furthermore, all that know the references to baptism in the New Testament know that immersion is the only form that meets the conditions of the same. As to the original meaning of the word and Apostolic practice in conformity to the same there is no reasonable doubt; but the ecclesiastical claim of authority to change the form raises a question that does not admit of settlement by the Scriptures that contain the mind of Christ and his Apostles, who are the only authorities recognized in this treatise that seek the unity of those that accept these standards of authority. However, among all those that do accept these authorities there is a reasonable hope of unity on the baptism question as well as on all others that have disturbed and divided the church.

However, there is an effort on the part of many to-day to discard baptism as an essential to Christian unity and to unite irregardless of differences on this question. They

speak of the "immersion dogma" as an "unjustifiable barrier to unity," and call on all to give up their opinions on baptism for the sake of unity. But what makes baptism any more a dogma than faith or any other of the "one" things prescribed by Paul as essential doctrines of the church? The same authority prescribed both, so they all, therefore, either stand or fall together. And what makes baptism by immersion a personal opinion, when both Christ and his Apostles so taught and practised it? Any unity that ignores baptism is false to the authority and teaching of Christ, and is contrary to Paul's statement of the Christian doctrines essential to unity, of which "one baptism" is one. Also unity without Christian baptism would be false to all past Christian experience and history, which records the failure of all efforts to unite without baptism, and shows that we can never have a united church on a divided baptism. Such a unity would divide more than it would unite, and would defeat the very unity that it was intended to promote. It seems more feasible and reasonable for all to accept and practice the one catholic baptism by immersion, because all accept this as valid baptism, and can unite upon the same. The College of Bishops of the Episcopal Church propose, in their Lambeth Quadrilateral, such a solution of the problem, which seems to be the only practicable and Scriptural solution. This is at least common ground; and, unless there is a disposition on the part of all to come together on common ground, there is no hope for unity. "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body," says Paul, "which is the church." This is not "open membership" nor "common membership," but Scriptural membership; and that which brings all into the universal body of Christ can bring all into

Christian unity. The last essential doctrine in Paul's statement is, "There is

### ONE GOD

The doctrine of "one God" is the major theme of the Bible. It is this teaching that distinguishes the Bible and the religion of the same from all other books and religions. The whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation is monotheistic in its teaching, and was written to reveal "the one God," Jehovah, the Great I Am, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega. In the Old Testament He speaks all things into existence in the morning of creation, provides for and watches over the human race, delivers His monotheistic Decalogue and Law of Moses for man's control and development, blesses the righteous and punishes the wicked, and during all the history of the race is "one living God" ruling and reigning in the world.

In the New Testament we find the same "one living God." Christ did not come to reveal a new God but to make a further revelation of the God of the Jews. He came to supplement or complete the revelation of the God of the Old Testament. To the revelation of God in the Old Testament he adds the revelation of Him as "the Father of all." God as a Father was a new conception and revelation of God, which was Christ's chief contribution to man's knowledge of God. He called God Father, and revealed Him as such. In fact, the universal Fatherhood of God was fundamental in his teaching, and was the keynote in his message to man. In this one word, "Father," Christ revealed God in all His relationships with man, and brought man into closest relationship to God. This one word took theology out of the schools of

the Prophets and Rabbis, and placed God in the home, where little children cry, "Abba, Father."

God is not only "the Father;" but He is "Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." This also was a new conception and revelation of God. The God of the Old Testament was revealed as the God of the Jews only; but Christ came to reveal Him as the God of the whole human race,—the universal Father. "That God is no respecter of persons, but is the Father of all," was a hard doctrine for the seclusive and exclusive Jews of Christ's day to accept. Paul emphasized this, saying, "He is *over all* (watches over and provides for all), and *through all* (works through all), and *in all* (in vital touch with all)."

The universal brotherhood of man is a logical deduction from the universal Fatherhood of God; and upon these two great doctrines, which were the major themes in the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, rests the foundation of Christian unity. If God is Father of all, then all are brethren, and all, being of the same family with a common Father, ought to be one. This is the fundamental reason and motive for unity; and, unless all believers in God through Christ accept and practice this fundamental doctrine of Christ, there is no hope for unity. We need, therefore, to teach and emphasize the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as the essential motive and foundation for Christian unity, and thereby bring all to realize that "there is one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in all."

#### CONCLUSION

"There is *one body*, and *one spirit*, even as ye were called in *one hope* of your calling; *one Lord*, *one faith*, *one baptism*, *one God* and *Father* of all, who is over

all, and through all, and in all." This is Paul's statement of the essential doctrines of the church, for which all in the church must stand, that the church may have unity and victory. Christian doctrine is as essential to Christian unity as Christian character. Christians cannot stand together except they stand for something,—some great truths that bind them together; and Paul states the doctrinal truths, for which all in the church must stand. Any union that is merely moral and ethical is not Christian union; it must also be doctrinal and dogmatic to be Christian. Union on Christ's morality and ethics alone would admit all extreme sects and parties, and even rationalists and all those that teach and believe as they please. Such a union would be a world-wide ethical society but not the universal church of Christ. There must be an orthodoxy in doctrine as well as character for Christian unity.

However, many contend at this point that doctrine is destructive of unity, that it has been the bombshell that has scattered and divided the followers of Christ, or at least it has been productive of partisan debates and strifes, which have been largely responsible for many divisions in the church. This is true; but at the same time morality and ethics cannot exist without doctrine that gives a divine basis and authority for the same. Otherwise they would be changeable and unstable, and become themselves fertile sources of debates and strife. Morality and ethics must be founded in divine teaching or authoritative truth to be true, lasting and binding.

So, then, if Christian doctrine is essential to Christian unity, whose statement of the essential doctrines of the church shall we accept, if not the Apostle Paul's? Just here lies one of the great difficulties in the way of Christian unity. The differences at this point are wide and

seemingly irreconcilable. Some say that we must take the statement of the Pope; others the statement of the divinely inspired Synods, as a representative of the Greek Church states in the following: "The holy Nicene Creed and the dogmatic decrees of the seven great Ecumenical Synods form a divine basis, infallible and of indisputable validity. By those Synods the Church of Christ, then one and united, spoke the final words on the question of faith. Any change of these doctrines constitutes, not progress and completion, but perversion of the substance of the faith, pernicious and perilous innovation. In the Ecumenical Synods the truth of the faith was interpreted rightly and crystallized definitely, after long investigations and discussions by the Church, on the basis of the Holy Scripture and the genuine ancient and catholic tradition." While many other communions would not go as far as the above statement for the divine authority of the assembled church and established tradition, yet they do not accept the finality of the New Testament on these matters; but look elsewhere for "the leading of the Spirit." Some do not look to the New Testament at all for authority but to "the inner consciousness." But, after all, when we have considered all the authoritative statements of Christian doctrine, the only statement that all can accept and unite upon is the New Testament statement, which is summarized by Paul as follows: "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord; one faith; one baptism; God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

However some that profess to accept the New Testament authorities as final demur at Paul's statement as fixed and complete. Some desire to omit one or more of the "one" things, prescribed by Paul, while others

desire to add to the same. For instance, some on account of their devotion to their denomination, would like to omit the "one body;" also some on account of their respective denominational creed, would like to omit the "one faith;" and others on account of their prejudice would like to omit the "one baptism." While, on the other hand, some would like to add "one order of worship" and "one polity of administration." On these two items in the church there have been wide differences; and the church has often divided over things of this nature. Almost every sect has something distinctive and different in their worship and organization; and many are strong in their convictions on these things, most all of which are merely customs and traditions without divine warrant and authority; but people have always been more insistent on established tradition than on divine revelation. Many insist on a prescribed ritual with fixed forms and ceremonies; and some go so far as to insist on minor details, such as "one kind of music," vocal music, and "one way of leading the music," by a man with a tuning-fork—a woman with an organ would not do. Some are sticklers for one kind of organization for work and government, insisting on one way of doing missionary work, some with and some without any organization except the local congregation, and many other minor matters of administration. While items of worship and matters of administration are important in the work and worship of the church, yet they are not essentials of Christian unity. Paul did not put any of the above "one" things that have to do with the worship and administration of the church in his statement of the essential doctrines for unity. In fact, the New Testament authorities give very little teaching or legislation on such things. So far as worship is concerned, any worship of God, according to Christ, is

acceptable that is "in spirit and in truth," Jno. 4; and any order and ritual is good according to Paul that is "edifying" and "decently and in order," I Cor. 14. Also any church polity is permissible that is democratic and expedient. Eph. 2:19; Col. 3:11; I Cor. 10:23; or at least such matters are not made essentials of Christian unity by New Testament authorities; yet they have disturbed and divided the church from the very beginning; and to-day they constitute some of the greatest barriers to unity, such as Priestly Orders, the Historic Bishopric, ecclesiastical and denominational organizations that dominate the members and congregations, iron-clad rituals and prescribed items and orders of worship, etc. All such things do not rightfully come within the scope of essential doctrines of the church. No one of the seven "one" things prescribed by Paul can be interpreted to cover these matters of worship and administration; and one's teaching and convictions on these things should not be allowed to interfere or prevent Christian unity.

If the figure, seven, means anything in the Scriptures, it means all, completeness. At any rate, the above seven "one" things, prescribed by Paul, are all the Christian doctrines that have to do with Christian unity. There are other essential doctrines in the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, such as love, repentance, etc.; but they do not touch the problem of unity, because there can be no such thing as two loves and two repentances, so there is, therefore, no grounds for differences on these things that make it necessary to prescribe "one love" and "one repentance." But not so with the seven "one" things that Paul prescribes. Unity could not be without "oneness" on these things. For instance, "There is one body,"—a multiplicity of bodies is the very opposite of unity; "one Spirit,"—if there were more, some would

follow one, and some another, and unity would be lost; "one Lord,"—if there were two, there could be no unity, "for you cannot serve two masters;" and so on. Unity is impossible without oneness of teaching and practice with respect to the seven "one" doctrines, which Paul prescribes for Christian unity, as reason and experience also attest.

So any one, therefore, that either adds to or takes from these seven essential doctrines for unity needs to read the warning of Rev. 22:18. They either stand or fall together. If one can be eliminated, then all may be omitted; and there is no doctrinal foundation for Christian unity, which is absurd; and, if one essential doctrine can be added, then many can; and the doctrinal foundation for unity would have to contain all the religious doctrines in the world, which is ridiculous. Paul's statement is the essential deposit of Christian doctrine, and contains nothing more nor less than that which is essential to Christian unity. So let all, therefore, that accept the authority of Paul as final, accept it, and unite upon it.

This chapter is unduly long, not because it is of more importance than other essentials of church membership, but because it covers so much disputed ground, and includes so many barriers to Christian unity to-day that must be noticed and treated in any frank, worth-while discussion of the subject of Christian unity. While Paul states the essential doctrines of the church in one brief sentence, yet it takes a volume, "line upon line, precept upon precept," to bring all to-day to accept his statement as the final deposit of Christian doctrine and to unite upon it.

## XII

### SERVICE

**B**UT unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he sayeth, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

“Now, this, he ascended, what is it that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is also the same that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.” 4:7-16.

The above is Paul's statement of Christian service, which is the third essential respect in which all in the church must be for the church. All must be for the church in active service; or, as he states it in his letter to the Romans, must “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.” Paul not only besought all members of the church to do this; but he did it himself. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved

me and gave himself up for me." From the time that Christ spoke to Paul out of the sky, and he answered, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?", he always referred to himself as "a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle," and conducted himself as such. According to Paul, faithful consecrated service is an essential requirement of all those that come into the church. "We are saved to serve," is the Christian ideal for church membership; and everyone that enters the church must dedicate himself accordingly to the service of Christ and humanity. Also, according to Christ, one's place and rank in the kingdom here is determined by his service, which is the Christian standard of greatness. "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your bond-servant: even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." Furthermore the reward in the world to come is to "the good and faithful servant," who is bidden to "enter into the joys of thy Lord." Service is the key that unlocks the door to life here and also hereafter.

Wherefore Paul sets forth Christian service in detail in his statement of the essentials of church membership, two of which, character and doctrine, we have studied in the preceding chapters; and we now come to the study of the third, *service*, as set forth by Paul in the above text. Many in the church are for the church in doctrine and character, that is, they accept and possess a Christian character, and believe every Christian doctrine; but they never do anything for the church,—they are not for the church in service. They lack the third essential, Christian service, which Paul sets out in the above. He speaks first of

## GIFTS

“ But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he sayeth,

When he ascended on high, he led captivity,  
And gave gifts unto men.

(Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same that ascended far above all the heavens that he might fill all things.”) When Christ ascended into the heavens, he left all the affairs of his kingdom in the hands of his disciples; and he gave gifts, or talents unto them that they might be qualified to continue the work which he had started. He spoke of this himself in the parable of the Talents, saying, “ For it is as a man going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey.” Paul calls these gifts or talents for service “ the grace,” a favour from the Lord, so Christian service is more a favour than an obligation; however all are held to a strict account for the use of his talents. To the one that failed to use his for the benefit and glory of the Lord, He said, “ Thou wicked and slothful servant, \* \* \* out into the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” There is no one in the church so weak and humble that he is not expected to serve to the extent of his ability; and, if he uses his one small talent in faithful service of Christ and humanity, he shall receive the same plaudit and reward as the five-talent man, “ Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.”

## THE WORK AND WORKERS

“And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” These were the workers (not officers) in the church; and to each Christ gave a gift to equip and qualify him for his respective work, which was defined by the meaning of the word. For instance, if he was an apostle, his work was that of one sent to represent Christ; if he was a prophet, his work was speaking for Christ; if an evangelist, his work was proclaiming the gospel of salvation through Christ; if a pastor, his work was shepherding the flock of Christ; and, if a teacher, his work was teaching the doctrine of Christ. While these respective fields are not sharply defined from each other, but rather overlap, yet taken together they cover all the work to be done in the church. However, we do not have two of these workers, namely, apostles and prophets, in the church to-day, because their work was completed by the original apostles and prophets, and recorded in the New Testament Scriptures, which, Paul says, “thoroughly furnish the man of God unto every good work,” so we do not need anyone to-day to act and speak for Christ. However, some to-day claim to represent Christ; but God does not “bear witness with them by signs and wonders and by manifold powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit,” which were the divine credentials of the original apostles and prophets, Mark 16: 17-18; and less would not be required of those to-day that claim to be apostles and prophets. In the absence of these divine credentials the claims of Apostolic Succession and Prophetic Speaking, which are barriers to Christian unity to-day, are without justification, and therefore false.

But the work of evangelizing, shepherding and teaching is still needed in the church to-day, so provisions were

made for the continuation of these workers in the church. See Titus 1:5-9; I Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 20:17-18, 28-31; II Tim. 2:1-2; Acts 8:1-4; Gal. 1:6-12. While this work was primarily the work of the Elders, Deacons and Evangelists, the official ministry of the church; yet there were no distinct lines drawn between their work and the work of other members of the church, except that of oversight and leadership, which was a difference in position more than in work. All were required, according to their gift and ability, to teach, evangelize and care for the flock; and all members of the church to-day are likewise required to help in this service. This work was not intended to be monopolized by the official ministry of the church; and, wherever this is done, Christian service is greatly weakened; and Christian unity is hindered. All to the extent of their gift and ability are expected to be teachers, pastors and evangelists, as they at Jerusalem that were scattered abroad by persecution went everywhere preaching the word of Jesus. Some of the most effective and efficient teachers, pastors and evangelists that have been in the church never held an office in the church, but gave themselves heartily and zealously to this service, wherever and whenever the opportunity to serve presented itself. All can do this work, if only they will; and there is much work to be done. "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth labourers into his harvest." "Go work to-day in my vineyards," says the Lord of the harvest, who said of himself, "I must work the works of him that sent me," while it is day, "for night cometh, when no man can work." And Paul says, "My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, *always abounding in the work of the Lord, for-*

asmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

### THE GOALS

First, "*for the perfecting of the saints,*" is a goal of Christian service, for which the pastors and teachers in the church work. They care for, feed and cultivate the souls of the saints, and do everything in their power for the spiritual development and perfection of "the flock, in which the Holy Spirit made them overseers." Every member enters the kingdom by birth, Jno. 3: 3-5, and is "a babe in Christ" that must be fed first "with milk" and then with "solid food which is for full-grown men;" and, as he develops, must be put to work and exercise in the church. The church is a spiritual gymnasium ("Exercise—gymnaze—thyself unto godliness"), where the soul is trained and developed. It is the school for the soul, where the truth that has to do with the life, welfare and destiny of the soul is taught and practised. It is a spiritual garden, where "God's husbandmen" cultivate souls, plucking out the ugly weeds of the flesh and planting the beautiful flowers and fruits of the spirit. It is God's studio, where spiritual artists chisel away the fleshy dross that covers the soul, and mould it into the beauty and perfection of the likeness of God. So, for all pastors and teachers in the church, who work "for the perfecting of the saints," there is the highest goal of human endeavour; and they ought to realize the nature, the greatness and sacredness of such a service. There is no higher or more sacred calling.

Next, "*unto the work of ministering,*" is another goal of Christian service. In the Apostolic church there was "the ministry of tables," "the ministry for the relief of widows," Good Samaritan ministries, etc.; and the church

to-day, as it was then, is in the midst of need on all sides, for the relief of which the church is in the world. For such service, even though it be little and humble, Christ offers the highest reward, saying, "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." The world has always been full of such need; and the stupendous task of relieving the same, which was placed upon his disciples, calls for the active service of all in the church. This service begins with those nearest at hand, and extends to all that one can reach; and there is no service that brings greater returns of joy and peace here and hereafter.

"*Unto the building up of the body of Christ,*" is another goal of Christian service, which is largely the work of the evangelists in the church. They labour under the great commission of Christ, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned," or, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Every soul saved, or every disciple made, is a spiritual stone built into the Holy Temple of the Lord, the church, "Ye, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." To the builders of the church Paul writes, "According to the grace of God, which was given unto me, as a wise

master-builder, I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire." However the building of this world temple is too big a task for a few professional evangelists. It is the task of the whole church; all must be preachers of the gospel, as they were in the beginning at Jerusalem; and all must work together "unto the building up (the completion) of the body of Christ,"—a goal for Christian service that calls for the united efforts of all Christians.

#### THE IDEALS

First, "*till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,*" is an ideal for Christian service. Paul mentions this first, because Christian unity is the major theme of his letter. His statement of this ideal is very definite and specific, and shows clearly for what unity Christians should work. It is "*the* unity of *the* faith and of *the* knowledge of *the* Son of God," (not *a* unity of *a* faith and knowledge of *a* Son of God). Everybody knows, and believes something about Jesus Christ; but Christian faith and knowledge are a definite and specific faith and knowledge,—"*one* faith" and knowledge; and Christian unity requires that all believe and know the same things about Him. This

faith and knowledge were "once for all delivered to the saints," and recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. For all to attain unto the unity of this faith and knowledge as herein contained and expressed is a high ideal for the church, in fact, one that the Apostolic church did not fully reach, because Christ had not been fully revealed and comprehended by all in the church. Accordingly, in the beginning of his letter Paul prays "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him," which shows that "the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God" were no easy attainment. It is perhaps easier to-day, because He is more fully revealed in the New Testament than He was to the Apostolic church; however, the New Testament does not reveal Him in all His fullness and glory, so to reach this ideal of faith and knowledge completely we would have to have a perfect faith and absolute knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is beyond the reach and grasp of human souls and minds; but we can know and believe in Him as we see Him revealed in the New Testament, and thereby press on toward this ideal of faith and knowledge; and, if all do this we shall thereby "attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God," which is Christian unity here; and, as we grow and develop, and finally pass over to be with Christ, we shall "know Him as He is;" and our minds and souls shall embrace the whole Christ, the Son of God.

Second, "*unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,*" is the ethical ideal of all Christian service, which every member of the church strives to realize. Such a high ideal lies far beyond human reach; but all can do as Paul, who, in speaking of his efforts to realize this ideal in his life, said,

“Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, if so be I may lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold on by Jesus Christ, Brethren, I count myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things that are past and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” This is indeed “a high calling,” or ideal, in fact the highest that can be conceived by the human mind, as even infidels have confessed, as follows:

“Beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christ, as it gleams and shines forth in the Gospels, men will never pass.”—*Goethe*.

“The coming ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus.”—*Renan*.

“The ethical principles of Christ will never be improved upon.”—*Payne*.

“If Christ were followed by his disciples, I would believe on him.”—*Ingersoll*.

But, if the disciples of Christ could follow Him completely and fully, He would no longer be the ideal of the race; but, as He is, He is the ideal of all human endeavour, which all strive to realize. He is the ideal, toward which the pastors and teachers work in their service of others in the church, endeavouring to develop each member “unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

The realization of this ideal is a matter of Christian growth into spiritual manhood, “that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love may *grow* up in all things into him, who is the head, even

Christ." This growth is slow and natural; but it must be cultivated; and herein lies the ideal of Christian service.

The ideal of the church as a whole is stated by Paul as follows: "*From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.*" This ideal is expressed by the figure or illustration of the human body with every member and part, "fitly framed and knit together" and working in perfect unison, harmony and love, and thereby building itself up in growth and progress. The growth and progress of the human body is natural, active, harmonious, co-operative, unified, progressive, and everything else that is necessary to make the church as a body or whole what it should be. The human body is ideal in all respects, because God made it so; and it is the pattern for the body of Christ, the church. And "As Moses is warned of God, when he is about to make the Tabernacle (the church in the wilderness), See that thou makest all things according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount." So Paul warns us; and the pattern that is shown us is the human body. He cautions that the church be given the right head, "even Christ" and that all members work in harmony and unity for the increase and building up of the body in love. See also I Cor. 12:12-31, where Paul elaborates this ideal. Such an ideal calls for the active service of every member of the church, and unites all in active, faithful loving service for the increase and development of the church. This is Christian unity, which is the major theme of Paul's letter.

## CONCLUSION

The paragraph of Paul's letter, which we have analyzed and studied under the above heads, sets forth the practical side of Christian unity,—unity in Christian service. And after all is said, this is the very heart of Christian unity. If Christian unity does not mean this, and produce this, it is nothing. "We are God's co-workers, or workers together for God," says Paul; and this is Christian unity in its real and final meaning. Many seem to think of Christian unity as existing in the minds and hearts of Christians, as being a subjective state (and it does have its essential subjective conditions); but Christian unity itself is more a unity of hands and tongues than of heads and hearts. Accordingly, there is Christian unity in any community, where all the Christians of the same are working together for God in order, harmony and love; and without such a unity of service there can be no Christian unity. Wherefore, Paul teaches that all in the church must be for the church in active Christian service, and thereby realize practical Christian unity.

## XIII

### CONDUCT

**P**AUL devotes nearly all of the remainder of his letter to Christian conduct, showing that all must be for the church in conduct, or, in other words, must live such lives that their conduct will be becoming Christians and for the church. Wherefore Paul writes, "Look therefore carefully how ye walk," because "ye are an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men." No one can be for Christ in theory and against him in practice. He must make his conduct conform to his profession, otherwise his religion is not Christian; and his church membership is libelous of the church of Christ.

The reason for this is evident. Conduct, unbecoming a Christian, in a member of the church cancels his claim of Christian character, repudiates his stand for Christian doctrine, and makes hypocrisy of his service in the church. Christian conduct is the final test of all Christian profession. It matters not how much he admires and professes to have Christian character, how strongly he believes and defends Christian doctrine, and how diligently he engages in Christian service; it will profit him nothing, unless he lives the Christian life. He may truly accept the holy character, he may valiantly stand for the holy doctrine, and he may actively engage in the holy service; yet, unless all this finds expression in the holy life, his whole Christian profession is a sham and a subterfuge. True Christian conduct, according to Christ and Paul, is the final *sine qua non* of a disciple of Christ, and

is required of all that profess to be in and for the church.

There was great need of teaching Christian conduct in the Apostolic church, because the standards of living in that age were very low. Even the prevailing religions of that day, which for the most part were a deification of the fleshly appetites and passions, were degrading and demoralizing; and there were few moral restraints placed upon the people in any way. They became so desolute that "God gave them up unto vile passions" and "a reprobate mind," because "they refused to have God in their knowledge and lives." Paul's moral indictment of that corrupt age in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans is revolting and almost unbelievable; yet all history of this age shows it to be true. It was into such a moral environment that Christianity was born; and it was from such degraded society that the early church drew its members. It was a herculean task, a moral miracle, to lift people from such depths of moral degradation and commit and keep them true to Christian standards of living. It necessarily required much teaching, exhortation and examples of Christian living; and yet, notwithstanding the efforts of the Apostles to make and keep the church morally upright and clean, there were now and then gross immoralities, such as incest, fornication, drunkenness, etc., in the church. However, on account of the wicked environment of the church, Christian patience and toleration were shown toward those that fell; and every effort was made to restore such to Christian living. See I Cor. 5 and II Cor. 2:5-11. To this end Paul wrote Gal. 6:1-5; and all his letters abound in commands and exhortations to Christian living.

Christ was no less strict in his moral requirements. The holy life, Christian conduct, was the final test of dis-

ipleship. To those that made professions of orthodoxy in religion, saying, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?" He said, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." In no other way can we "let our lights shine" truly for Christ and His church. Christian conduct is the flaming torch that lights the way of those in the darkness of this world who would "glorify the Father who is in heaven." On the other hand, nothing can injure the church more than the false living of its members. In fact, no one can be for the church, and live a life contrary to the moral and ethical standards of the same.

For this reason Paul sets out at length and in detail Christian conduct, or conduct that will be for the church. He sets forth both what members of the church should do and what they should not do. He teaches first the becoming conduct of Christians in general, and then the becoming conduct of the specific classes in the church, such as husbands, wives, children and servants. His teaching is so simple and clear that it needs no comment or elaboration, so it is merely quoted under the following heads:

(I) *The Conduct of Christians in General:*

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, but ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus; that ye put away, as concerning your former

manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

“Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye the truth each one with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.

“Be ye therefore imitators of God as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, and offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell.

“But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: rather giving of thanks. For this ye know of a surety that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon

the sons of disobedience. Be ye partakers therefore with them; for ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well pleasing unto the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; for the things that are done by them in secret is a shame even to speak of. But all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for everything that is made manifest is light. Wherefore he sayeth, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

“Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And be ye not drunk with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.

(2) *Conduct of Wives and Husbands:*

“Wives, be in subjection unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might

present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself; for no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; because we are members of his body. For this cause shall a man leave his mother and father, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church. Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she fear her husband."

(3) *Conduct of Children and Parents:*

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord."

(4) *Conduct of Servants and Masters:*

"Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him."

There are two lives that run through the whole of

Paul's teaching on Christian conduct, namely, the life of "the old man," the man of flesh, and the life of "the new man," the man of spirit, which is Christian life. Christian life is a "new" life,—“We arise to walk in newness of life;” and this new life of the spirit is given by contrast with the old life of the flesh, which is forbidden Christians. The conduct of "the old man," the things that Christians must not do, and the conduct of "the new man," the things that Christians must do, as gathered from Paul's statement above, are as follows:

*The conduct of "the old man":*

Lying; anger; stealing; corrupt speech; grieving the Holy Spirit; bitterness; wrath; clamour; railing; malice; fornication; uncleanness; covetousness; filthiness; foolish talking; jesting; drunkenness; eye-service; threatening; etc.

*The conduct of "the new man":*

Telling the truth; work; almsgiving; edifying speech; kindness; tenderheartedness; forgiveness; thanksgiving; righteousness; truth; praising God; love; obedience to parents and masters; honour of parents; etc.

It is evident from the above that Christian conduct is just the old question of right and wrong, sin and righteousness. There are only two lives to live, the evil and the good; only two masters to serve, the corrupt Prince of this world and the holy Prince of life; and only two classes of people in the world, saints and sinners, the world and the church; and everyone must choose and follow the one or the other in his life, and conform his conduct according to his choice. Christian conduct consists of "Abhorring that which is evil and clinging to that which is good." "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof; neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments

of righteousness unto God." This is Christian conduct; and, when all members of the church do this, there is unity of conduct in the church, which is a vital part of Christian unity.

Christian conduct has a vital bearing on Christian unity in many ways. Christ recognized this in his prayer for the unity of his disciples. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them from the world, but thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Christian conduct is one of the things that distinguishes the church from the world, and makes the disciples of Christ one in him. Furthermore, there is nothing that is more disturbing and divisive of the church from within than the "disorderly walk" of members; and, on the other hand, when all are united in living the Christian life, each helping the other to shun the evil and choose the good, there is no stronger tie and bond of unity. The unity of kindred lives as expressed in the unity of Christian conduct is an essential of Christian unity as taught by Christ and the Apostle Paul; and all in the church must, therefore, be for the church in Christian conduct, and thereby unite for Christ and righteousness.

## XIV

### BATTLE

**F**INALLY, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly as I ought to speak. But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: who I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, that ye may comfort your hearts." Eph. 6:10-22.

In the above Paul sets forth Christian battle, or warfare, which is the last essential of church membership. The preceding essentials, Christian character, doctrine, service and conduct, which have been studied in the preceding chapters, make Christian warfare necessary, because they all involve effort and struggle. The development of Christian character is a high endeavour that calls for the farthest reaches of the soul; the defense of

Christian doctrine is an undertaking that requires all the abilities of the mind; the work of Christian service is a task that requires all the powers and faculties of the body to fulfill; and the living of the Christian life, or Christian conduct is an effort that demands all the strength of the body, mind and soul. All this means effort and struggle,—a battle wherein great spiritual strength, strong moral courage and the best religious training and equipment are required. Without such a battle Christian character would be low, Christian doctrine weak, Christian service ineffective and Christian conduct deficient. Christian battle, as set forth by Paul in the above, is the essential means of realizing all the other essentials of Christianity.

However, there are few in the church that seem to realize that the church is a militant institution. They seem to look upon it as a place for spiritual rest and recreation; but nothing could have been further from Paul's conception of the church; and the Old Testament prophets say, "Woe unto those that are at ease in Zion." "Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the eternal life, whereunto thou wast called, and didst make the good confession before many witnesses," wrote Paul to Timothy. While the teaching of Christ and His Apostles was against all physical and fleshly warfare; yet they enjoined a spiritual warfare, in which every disciple must be a soldier. While Christ commanded Peter to "put up the sword," and said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence;" yet He also said, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword;" and "Now, he that hath a purse, let him take it,

and likewise a wallet; and he that hath none, let him sell his cloak, and buy a sword." These statements are not contradictory, but refer to two kinds of warfare, the one carnal and the other spiritual. The church in the world is the Lord's visible army, which is organized to fight His battles. It is set for the overthrow and defeat of all the forces of evil in the world, which Paul says are mighty. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places." This warfare began in heaven, when the prince of evil was cast out, and has continued on earth from the Garden of Eden throughout all the ages of the past, and will continue, until the final and complete victory over Satan, when he and all his hosts will be bound and cast into the abyss and lake of fire and brimstone. Rev. 20.

Every one, therefore, that comes into the church comes for battle, comes as soldier of Jesus Christ to "stand at Harmageddon, and do battle for the Lord." Church membership, then, is no child's play, but a man's battle, where courageous souls fight for God against Satan, for the right against the wrong, for the church against the world. Every one in the church must, therefore, be for the church in this mighty battle. There is no neutral ground. "He that is not for me is against me," says Christ, the Captain of our salvation. The clarion call, "Who is on the Lord's side?", is sounded forth to all; and all that answer "I" by coming into His church, the army of the Lord, must stand for the church in all its efforts and battles.

Such a warfare requires great spiritual strength, strong moral courage and the best religious training and equipment. Wherefore, Paul says, "Be strong in the Lord,

and in the power of his might." A mere strength of body and mind will not avail. There must be strength of soul, and that, too, "in the Lord, and in the strength of his might,"—that strength that was in Paul when he wrote, "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me." As to one's religious training and equipment for Christian warfare, Paul adds, "Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. \* \* \* Wherefore take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore." Paul's repeated and emphasized command "to stand" shows that steadfastness is the most important trait in a Christian soldier as it is in all soldiers. That standing or staying quality which enables a soldier to stand by his post of duty at all hazards is the first essential in a good soldier; and all soldiers must be trained and disciplined to this end. Hence Paul's oft-repeated command, "Be ye steadfast, immovable," in every letter that he wrote to Christians. Unless one will stand by the guns he is worthless as a soldier; and this is especially true of a Christian soldier. It takes moral courage and spiritual bravery to stand out "against the wiles of the devil" and "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts in heavenly places." Often, in comparison with such array of powers and forces of the devil, the army of the Lord seems small and weak; but be it remembered that "God and one more" constitute a majority, and are able to win the victory, provided that one stands loyally by his post of duty. "Jehovah the Lord God of hosts will fight for you," is just as true of God's people to-day as it has ever been; and He has never lost a battle, when his people stood obediently and loyally by

Him. That Christian soldiers may be able "to stand," Paul commands all "to put on the whole armour of God."

The Christian armour, the religious equipment of the Christian soldier, is, therefore, of paramount importance. Accordingly, Paul prescribes and describes each piece by comparison to the armour of the Roman soldier, with which all were familiar. First there was the girdle or belt about the loins to give the soldier strength, agility and confidence, which, Paul says, is "truth." Truth strengthens and enables the Christian to use his powers, and thereby gives him confidence in battle. Without this divine truth the mightiest are helpless in their fight against error and evil; but with it the weak are mighty to the tearing down of the strongholds of the adversary.

Next, there was the breastplate,—a heavy metal coat or jacket to protect the body, which, for the Christian soldier, is "righteousness." There is no protection for the soul so impenetrable as true righteousness. It repulses the attacks of the enemy, and awes them into retreat. Even the devil fears to strike a righteous man; and, even if he does, he cannot hurt the soul that is clothed in righteousness. Christ's shield of righteousness often protected him from the murderous attacks of his enemies, who shrank back from his holy presence. The white light from his perfect holiness blinded and awed them into retreat and flight. When the hired murderer was about to strike Cato, he withdrew, when he heard the words of the righteous man, "Dost thou strike Cato?" Everyone, though he be a demon, fears to strike the righteous; and, even when they do strike, they are unable to wound the soul.

Next were the sandals or shoes for the feet, which enabled the soldier to stand and advance over difficulties.

This in the Christian is "the preparation of the gospel of peace." Preparation in the knowledge and proclamation of the gospel enables the Christian to progress, because the gospel is the good news that brings recruits and additions into the army of the Lord, and thereby strengthens and advances the cause of the right against the wrong. For this reason it was written, "How beautiful are the feet that bring glad tidings of good things!"

Also, there was the shield, a large metal disk, worn on the arm, to protect any part of the body in danger, which was the most important piece of the defensive weapons. This is "faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one." No arrow, however sharp and well aimed, can strike the man that holds "the shield of faith;" however, without faith he is vulnerable at all points. Every soldier must believe in his leader; and, whenever an army loses faith in its head, it is lost. Likewise the Christian soldier must hold a believing attitude toward God and Christ, the Captain of his salvation; otherwise he cannot "fight the good fight of the faith;" but will be lost in the hostile attacks of infidelity. While Christian faith is reasonable, reason cannot take the place of faith; and, whenever any one doffs "the shield of faith" for the shield of reason, he is undone, because he has "the cart before the horse," or rather the shield at his back where it is not needed. Reason is a weapon to be used behind the shield of faith; and, when thus used, it is a powerful weapon in the hands of the Christian soldier. When God said, "Come now, let us reason together," He did not mean for man to cast aside the shield of faith for reason; but He invites man to a *reasonable* faith, or a "reasonable service," which, Paul says, is expected of every Christian soldier. Rom. 12:1. There is no antagonism whatever between Christian faith and

reason; nor nothing about either, when rightly seen, to prevent the Christian soldier from using both together in his battle for God against Satan.

Furthermore, "take the helmet of salvation," which was a metal hat or covering for the head, and bore the emblem or ensign of the cause for which the soldier fought. This in Christian warfare is "salvation." No harm can come to the saved; and the salvation of the world is the great cause for which the Christian soldier fights; and this salvation he wears as a helmet with an ensign for the salvation of the world.

Then, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." This is the only offensive weapon of the Christian soldier; but he needs no other. Christ used no other; and he repulsed every attack of the devil, Mat. 4:1-11. No one can withstand the withering strokes of the word of God as "it is written." "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the hearts." With such a weapon skillfully used the Christian soldier is invincible.

Lastly, there must be prayer in the heart and upon the lips of the Christian soldier,—“with all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit.” Soldiers in carnal warfare usually fight with curses in their heart and upon their lips; but Christian soldiers must pray as they fight. They must pray not only for the cause for which they fight, but for their comrades in battle,—“on my behalf,” says Paul. It is said that God had to remove Stonewall Jackson, before the Confederacy could be defeated, because he prayed before and as he fought; and others were praying for him. There is no way to defeat

a praying soldier, because prayer brings him into touch with the power of God that breaks down all opposition. Prayer is a divine electrical power that fills, permeates and charges the army of God with the very power of God, which is invincible. Christian prayer also gives confidence, and makes one bold. The Christian soldier must fight and speak "with boldness, as I ought to speak," says Paul.

In the closing words of Paul's letter, which are of a personal nature, there is a recognition and declaration of the need of unity in the army of the Lord Jesus Christ. "But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, that he may comfort you." Though Paul was far away and in prison, nevertheless he felt that he was still a part of the Lord's fighting forces at Ephesus, and that he and they were in an indissoluble union for the cause of Christ; and for this reason they ought to know about each other, so he had sent Tychicus as a personal connecting link between the two. Thus Paul by letters and personal messages brought the church in his day into vital touch and unity with all Christian forces everywhere, and thereby kept the church united. This unity, as appears from all his letters, was close, active and sympathetic; and through such a unity of knowledge, action and sympathy the church triumphed over the forces of evil.

Accordingly, the great need in the church, the army of the Lord Jesus Christ to-day, is such a unity as existed in the Apostolic church. Centuries ago the church divided into separate camps, and has been fighting ever since in separate armies. The army of the Lord has been

divided and subdivided, until to-day there are over two hundred separate and distinct parts, all fighting for the same cause, when they are not engaged in fighting each other. Could there be a greater farce and travesty of a great cause? No wonder, then, that the church has fought a losing battle against the forces of evil. No army can be victorious when divided into disjointed parts, which often cancel and counteract the work and influence of each other. This was shown to be true even in the late world war, where there were only four or five separate armies fighting for a common cause. But, when they all united under the leadership of Gen. Foch, victory began to come their way; and soon the victory was complete. It seems that spiritual soldiers fighting for eternal things ought to have as much sense and love for their cause as carnal soldiers fighting for this world and the things thereof. Are "the sons of this world for their own generation wiser than the sons of light?" It must be confessed that it does appear so in many cases; but surely the Christian forces will soon find their way into a united army of their common Lord and Captain of their salvation. God hasten the day when it shall be so.



## CONCLUSION



## XV

### VALEDICTORY SUMMARY

**P**EACE be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible." 6:23-24.

The above is more than a formal, conventional valedictory. While the letter conforms to the conventionalities of the Apostolic age, yet every word of the same is fraught with meaning; and no part of the letter contains greater significance with respect to Christian unity than the close. In the above valedictory, Paul summarizes much of his teaching on unity, which he had elaborated in the body of the letter. He crowds many of the essentials of unity into these brief farewell words, as if he would thereby impress and indelibly stamp the same upon the minds and hearts of all Christians. Every significant word and phrase reveal an essential truth of Christian unity.

First, "Peace be to the brethren." This defines what Christian unity is. It is peace among brethren. Not a static, stagnant peace that is born of indifference and indolence, but an active working peace that fills all the days and hours with Christian work and worship such as Paul had outlined in his letter. Such a peace as is to be found in the busy beehive, where all the members of the colony work together in peace and harmony for the common cause. While the church is the army of the Lord, and is set for the defeat and overthrow of the forces of Satan, there must be no fighting within its own ranks; it

must be at peace with itself that it may win the victory over the enemy. Whenever peace among the brethren is lacking, and they begin to fight each other, as has often been the case, the cause of Satan flourishes, and the church of Christ is put to open shame and defeat before the world. Accordingly, Christ prayed that his disciples might be "one," or at peace with each other, and thereby unite against the common foe and for the common cause. For this peace to be effective it must begin with the individual member, and extend throughout the whole church. Each member must be at peace with himself before he can be at peace with his brethren. There must be that inner calm of the soul that comes from the adjustment of all things within to the stress of all things without, which Christ alone can give. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful." When this peace that "passeth all understanding" pervades the church; and it moves forward to do the will of God on earth, this is the ideal of Christian unity. Wherefore, Paul prays in the closing of his letter, "Peace be to the brethren."

Furthermore, "the brethren" defines the scope of Christian unity. Christian unity was not intended to include the whole human race nor all religious fraternities of the earth, as some seem to think and teach, but "the brethren" only. This Christian fraternity is set forth under many appellatives in the Scriptures, such as "the disciples," "the saints," "the children of God," "the household of the faith," "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession," etc. Any plan for unity that transcends or falls short of the scope of these appellatives of the church of Christ is, therefore, fundamentally wrong. One of the

great difficulties of Christian unity is to stay within the proper bounds of these words. Some liberalists are disposed to go beyond and include more than these terms admit; and other narrow sectarians are inclined to draw the lines of demarkation far within these boundaries of Christian brotherhood. "The brethren," no less, no more, were those that Paul sought to unite.

"Love with faith," or, as Paul states the same in his letter to the Galatians, "faith working through love," is the great essential of Christian unity. These two words, "faith and love," carry us back to the beginning of this study, where it was shown that love is the great essential motive-power that makes Christian unity possible and that faith is the divine sight and reasonable intelligence that makes it practicable. See Chapters II and III of Introduction. Love gives the hope, the vision; and faith leads the way to a practical realization of the same. Love and faith, working thus together, can do anything, or at least can accomplish any task that Christ assigned his disciples, even their unity. Love and faith are the two great *sine qua nons* of Christian unity, wherefore Paul puts them in the last words of his letter for the unity of the church, praying that "love with faith" may be in all the brethren.

"From God the Father,"—God the Father is the spiritual foundation of Christian unity. The universal fatherhood of God, from which the universal brotherhood of man is a logical deduction, is the great fundamental truth underlying Christian unity. Christ continually emphasized this truth as the foundation of his religion; and Paul built upon the same in establishing the church and outlining the principles for the unity of the same. As long as "God the Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all, from whom every family in heaven

and earth is named," is kept in mind, the church, the family of God, cannot disintegrate and separate into warring factions; but all will be drawn together around the common Father, who loves all His children alike, and desires that all unite for the welfare and upbuilding of the divine family on earth.

"And the Lord Jesus Christ,"—the Lordship of Jesus Christ is another great fundamental truth of Christianity that must be accepted and conformed to in order to have Christian unity. Any unity that is not centered in Jesus Christ cannot be Christian unity. Christian unity is Christo-centric in authority, in substance, in name, in form, in purpose, in scope, and in every other essential respect. In fact, the acknowledging and conforming to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the only way to make anything Christian. The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the only authoritative seal and stamp that proves a thing to be truly Christian. Without this nothing could be Christian; Christian unity would be an empty, meaningless impossibility; but to all those that accept and conform to the Lord Jesus Christ everything is Christian; and Christian unity is an easy, practicable step, because by following Him we come into unity. The Apostle Paul in all his preaching and writing never lost sight of this guiding star, "the day-star from on high," the Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to the first Christian prophet, "shall visit us, to shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace." He is the only way of peace and unity for the divided warring sons and daughters of men.

Finally, "All that *love* our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible." It is only by *loving* the Lord Jesus Christ can unity be realized. No perfunctory theoretical acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ will suffice for

Christian unity ; but only a loving, loyal and obedient acceptance and performance of his will can unite the followers of Christ. Paul did not attempt to unite those that merely accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, but only those that *loved* him, and that, too, "with a love incorruptible,"—a perfectly sincere love. No pretended, hypocritical love for the Lord Jesus Christ can stand the strain and stress of maintaining the unity of the brotherhood in Christ. So, then, Christian unity resolves itself finally into a matter of getting all to love the Lord Jesus Christ supremely and sincerely ; and, when this is done, Christian unity will come of itself. Upon all those that are striving to this end Paul prays the grace of God in these closing words of his letter, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible."

In closing his letter with a prayer Paul indicates the place and importance of prayer in the solution of the problem of Christian unity. It is, as he shows in the third chapter of his letter, the great dynamic that can bring Christian unity to pass. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father," he says ; and, when all Christians do the same, Christian unity will come.

## XVI

### CHRIST'S GLORIOUS CHURCH

**C**HRISt also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a *glorious* church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." 5:25-27.

The above reveals Christ's estimate of the church. Paul began his letter by giving God's estimate of the same, showing that He planned it before the foundation of the world, making everything else secondary and contributory to it; and in the fulness of time He sent His own Son into the world to establish it. Christ so loved the church that he made the supreme sacrifice for it, that the church might be what it was planned to be, "a sanctified, cleansed, holy church without spot or blemish or any such thing,"—a perfect church, a *glorious church*.

This is Paul's ideal for the church. This high ideal has not yet been realized in its full glory. There are yet many ugly marring spots and blemishes on the church to-day that must be removed before the church can come into her full glory. The worst spot and blemish of all is division,—a damaging blot that mars the beauty and dissipates the strength of the church. Paul foresaw the coming of this blot, and wrote this letter that we might be prepared to deal with it and finally to remove it. We have studied the letter with this end in view; and we have found it to be a complete treatment and solution of the problem. In the first half of the letter Paul outlines the church, showing it to be *The Church For All* with every

provision to make it such; and in the latter half of the letter he teaches that *All Must Be For The Church*, giving therein the essentials of church membership, namely, *character, doctrine, service, conduct and battle*, which constitute the essential realms of Christian unity. In this expository revelation of *The Church For All and All For The Church*, as set forth by the Apostle Paul and analyzed and studied by us under these two heads, we have Paul's ideal for the church, which is a high ideal, in fact, a perfect church, *a glorious church*. Although the church has never realized this high ideal, and is still to-day far from it with many imperfections to be remedied and eliminated; yet in spite of these spots and blemishes the church is, and has always been, *a glorious church*.

In the first place, the church of Christ is glorious *in character*. It is divine in character. God planned it, and Jesus Christ built it; and it is, therefore, as far above every other institution in the world as the works of God are above the works of man. While it has not always maintained its divine character, but has risen and fallen with the civilization of the age; yet it has always stood out above and beyond every contemporary institution in character. In fact, it is the only institution that makes a community fit to live in. Wherever it has been planted, it has raised the standards of character and living of all those that came in touch with it. It has always stood for the right against the wrong, for the true against the false, for the elevating against the degrading; in fact, for everything that is for the welfare of the human race against everything that drags it down.

Next, it is glorious *in personnel*. In the first place, it has a glorious head, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. No institution can be more glorious than its head, because the head of an institution is either the glory

or shame thereof. Did any institution ever have a more glorious head? To begin with, He had all the glory and equality with God the Father, of which He emptied Himself, and came to earth to serve, suffer and die that He might achieve higher glory. "Wherefore God highly exalted him, and gave him a name that is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow \* \* \* and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Accordingly, when Christ had finished his work of redemption, he prayed the Father, saying, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee. \* \* \* I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory that I had with thee before the world was." As he ascended and returned to the right hand of God in all His glory, a voice sounded out over the battlements of heaven, saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory will come." This King of glory is the head of the church; and a church with such a glorious head must be glorious itself, because the body shares the glory of the head.

The church has not only a glorious head but also a glorious body. The personnel of the membership of the church has always been the best people of every age and every community. While the members of the church in every age have been fallible human beings, with many weaknesses and imperfections, yet they have stood out in life and character far above the rest of the people of that age. In fact, the greatest lives and characters that adorn the pages of history have been members of the church, whose greatness was attributed largely to the in-

fluence of the church. Who stands higher in the history and the affections of the world than Peter, John and Paul, Chrysostom, Constantine the Great, St. Augustine, Peter the Great, Luther, Knox, Calvin, Campbell, Gladstone, Lloyd-George, Wilson, etc.? What is true of the past is also true of the present. Compare the membership of the church as a whole with those that are not members in any community; and it will be found to contain the best of every community. While there are always some in the church that are a reproach to the church, yet the personnel of the church as a body is always the best that the community affords; and the church makes them better. In fact, the church appeals only to the best people, and seeks the worst only to make them better. Wherefore it is a glorious institution.

Furthermore, the church is glorious *in mission*. No institution ever had a higher and greater mission. It is world-wide in scope, and reaches from earth to heaven. It includes the regeneration, the elevation and redemption of the whole human race, and has to do not only with this world but also the world to come. It is set for the overthrow and defeat of all the forces of evil in the world and for the leadership of all the forces of good. It opposes all wrong, and espouses all good. It is to make men good, wise, clean, just, merciful, faithful, noble, loving, tender-hearted, happy, righteous, holy, patient, long-suffering, kind, meek, true, honourable, pure, strong, manly, energetic, in fact, all that Christian manhood stands for and is. It is sent to "seek and save that which is lost,"—the outcasts of society, the human wrecks and prodigals of earth, and to restore them to decency, usefulness and happiness. Its mission is to serve and save every creature in all the world, from the urchin in the street to the king on the throne, from the man in the gut-

ter to the priest in the temple, from the man with a hoe and chain to the man with a book and microscope. A church with such a glorious mission cannot die, but must go on through service to glory.

Also, the church is glorious *in achievement*. After all it is achievement that makes it glorious. It matters not how glorious the mission may be, unless the church actually does things, it is due no glory. It is work accomplished that glorifies. Christ recognized this in his prayer for glory. "Father, I glorified thee in the earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me." In no other way can glory rightfully come to one; and the church must be glorified in the same way. The work and achievements of the church in the past are its crown of glory to-day. History is full of the good that it has done; and its achievements in behalf of humanity have been great. In fact, every good thing that has blessed the race for the past two thousand years has come either directly or indirectly from or through the church. Education, culture, and civilization, with all its conveniences, comforts and luxuries, have followed in the path of the church. Man has often prostituted these blessings; but they are nonetheless a boon of the church. The present also reveals the great good and wonderful achievements of the church. You have but to compare the country and community that has not the church with those that have it to see the great good that it is achieving to-day in the lives of men and nations. Every good work accomplished and every blessing achieved is an added jewel in her crown of glory, which it has won by its achievements in the past.

Finally, the church is glorious *in destiny*. "Things that eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God pre-

pared for those that love Him." God's plans and purposes for the church were made before the foundation of the world on the one hand, and extend unto the farthest limits of eternity on the other; and everything in time and on the earth has been and is for the working out and perfecting of these plans and purposes. As the race was prepared for the revelation and appreciation of these things, "God revealed them through the Spirit." The New Testament is the fullest revelation that has so far been given; but this contains only a meagre revelation of the golden glories that God has prepared for the church in the great beyond. John, in the closing chapters of the Apocalypse, raises the curtain on a few of these glories, which God has in store for His church. The first scene portrays the return of the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, to receive His Bride, the Church; and, after the honeymoon of a thousand years on the earth, the new heaven and the new earth and the New Jerusalem, the eternal home of the Bride, are revealed. The imagination in its wildest flights is unable to grasp the beauty, splendour and grandeur of the place. And then Paradise Regained is unfolded before our dazed, wondering eyes; and we are lost amid the glories of this Paradise of God. This is the glorious destiny of the church.

Truly, the church of Christ is a glorious church,—glorious in character, in personnel, in mission, in achievement, in destiny and in every other respect that makes glorious, but not so glorious as it should be, it must be confessed. The glory of the church has been dimmed by the human blots and blemishes that mar its beauty and usefulness, the most damaging one of which is division. Division puts the church in a bad light before the world, and thereby injures its character; it also brings reproach

upon the personnel of the church by contradicting the claim of one head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and one body, the church; furthermore, it distracts the attention, and dissipates the forces of the church from its divine mission, and produces civil warfare instead; also it cripples and hinders the achievements of the church, and clouds its glorious destiny. There is no spot nor blemish on the church that robs the church of so much power and glory. What a glorious church the church of Christ would be if only it were united! Its character would thereby be greatly ennobled; its personnel would be honoured; its mission would be accomplished; its achievements would be greatly increased; and its destiny would be clear and shining. As a result, the church would radiate glory on all sides, until the earth would be full of glory, as the waters that cover the sea, and the millennium would be ushered in. Then the church would realize its divine ideal, "a sanctified, cleansed, holy church without spot or blemish or any such thing, a glorious church," a perfect church. That we might be able to remove this damaging, hindering blot of division, Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, which we have studied with this end in view. We commend this letter to the reader and to the church as a whole as the only solution of the problem. The objective of this book has been to bring out Paul's teaching therein on the unity of the church and apply the same to the problem of unity to-day; and, if any comment of the author obscures the same, or seems to be in error, let this be overlooked and forgotten; but let what Paul has written and taught on the subject be remembered and heeded, which is the key to the solution of the problem.

## XVII

### LIBERTY AND UNITY

**T**HE question of liberty naturally arises, whenever unity is proposed, because the two are somewhat antagonistic, and must be harmonized, before there can be any real unity. To have unity and at the same time preserve liberty, or vice versa, is a troublesome question that often stands in the way of unity. It is rather surprising, when we first think of it, that Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, treating so fully the subject of Christian unity, says nothing about Christian liberty. The reason for this is, Paul in this letter sets forth the essentials of unity, with respect to which there is no liberty. Liberty has to do with the non-essentials, which constitute the realm of Christian liberty, which is fully treated by Paul in his letters to the Corinthians and Galatians. In these letters Paul endeavours to define the scope and application of Christian liberty so as to insure unity; and the connecting link between the two is loyalty. *Liberty, loyalty and unity* constitute the Scriptural trinity of the New Testament Church. Christian loyalty, of course, has to do with the essentials of Christianity, which are fully treated by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, as we have seen in this exposition of the same. In view of the fact of the vital bearing of liberty on unity, it is deemed wise to add a chapter in conclusion of this study (on Christian liberty) which can not be passed unnoticed in any full treatment of Christian unity.

*Liberty, loyalty and unity* constitute the Scriptural trin-

ity of the New Testament church, which must be kept in mind together, and preserved in all Christian work and worship; otherwise their Scriptural use and meaning will be missed. Christian unity can not be without the broadest liberty that loyalty will permit; nor is any one of the three truly Christian without the others. The Catholic church has unity without liberty; and the Protestant church has liberty without unity; but the Apostolic church had unity with liberty, which was realized and maintained through loyalty. However, when these three become separated, and it is necessary to choose between the three, loyalty must be placed before liberty and unity. Luther was offered unity without liberty at the sacrifice of loyalty; and he answered by nailing up his thesis and burning the Papal decree at the gates of Wittenberg, thereby laying the foundation for his great Reformation upon loyalty and liberty; however, in so doing, liberty was over-emphasized and unity was lost. The over-emphasis of liberty soon led to divisions, which have continued to multiply from that day to this. Luther solved the problem of loyalty and liberty; but he was unable to solve the problem of unity, which has come down to us as an unsolved problem. We have considered the bearing of Christian loyalty upon Christian unity, as set forth by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians; and we now propose in this chapter a study of Christian liberty in its bearing upon the same.

Liberty is one of the most significant words in the vocabulary of men. It stands for that freedom of body, mind and soul that is dearer than life to all who know its meaning and value. It has been the watchword and battle-cry of many wars with tongue and sword; and there has been enough bloodshed in the cause of liberty to incarnadine the streams of earth. This crimson stream

runs through ancient history to the foot of the Cross, where Jesus Christ poured out his blood that men might be free, and thence on down the stream of the ages, bringing the blessings of liberty to the race. This precious heritage comes to us stained with the blood of all the heroes, martyrs and saviours of earth, and is, therefore, the priceless gift of the ages to the world of free men to-day. It must be preserved at all hazards; and a way to unity that does not sacrifice it must be found.

Christ made the greatest contribution to the cause of human liberty. We are largely indebted to Him for our freedom of body, mind and soul; and for this reason the name of Christ has been prefixed to the word, thus, Christian liberty. "Christian," in this connection, is not a narrowing limiting adjective, but a defining and enlarging one. It stands for all that Christ has contributed to the cause of liberty, which is so much that the word has acquired a greatly enlarged, if not a new meaning and value. Christ, as He promised, has made men and women "free indeed," and, for this reason every phase of liberty to-day bears the Christian stamp, and must be studied in the light of Christian teaching. Christ gave the fundamental principles that underlie all freedom; and a study and application of these principles is necessary to the possession and enjoyment of any true liberty.

In the first place, Christ taught what liberty is, and how it may be acquired. He made it clear that liberty is not license but freedom within law. It does not mean the throwing off and disregard of all law, but rather a state of freedom that is the result of conformity to law. "If ye abide in my word (by obeying the same), then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." David expressed the same truth thus, "I will walk at liberty, for I will seek

thy precepts;" and James speaks of the gospel as "the law of liberty," because by obedience to the same one is made free. Liberty through the knowledge and obedience to truth is, therefore, Christian liberty. In fact, all true liberty is a state of freedom that results from the knowledge of and obedience to the laws of being that form and regulate life. This is true in every realm and department of life,—in the material, social, intellectual and religious. Anyone, therefore, that would be free in God's world must conform to the laws of the same; otherwise he is under the condemnation and slavery that comes to all lawbreakers.

Christ not only taught this; but His whole life was lived in conformity to the same. In all things He recognized God as the supreme Lawgiver of heaven and earth; and He endeavoured to do His will. He was under authority of high heaven, and obeyed the law of both heaven and earth to the last jot and tittle, and was, therefore, free. He walked upon the earth as a free man; and everything that He did and said was by the choice and will of a free man, unafraid and untrammelled by the traditions and standards of the age, in which He lived; and this, too, in spite of those in authority, who hated Him, and sought His enslavement by every known plot and trap; yet He lived and worked in their midst free and unmolested. Often they went to arrest Him; but they feared to take Him, because they found no broken law or fault in Him. Thus, through obedience to both the law of God and man, He lived a life of absolute freedom in the midst of a people that were politically, socially, intellectually and religiously enslaved; and in the end He died that all might be likewise free. The wonder and glory of His life was its absolute freedom; and the marvel of His death was its power and influence in bringing freedom to all that are

in bondage of any kind; and this liberty in life and death was no miraculous gift from above, but a natural achievement through obedience to law, which is the only way that men and women can be "free indeed."

Another fundamental principle underlying the freedom of Christ's life was His Spirit, as stated by Paul thus, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," which is the supplementary truth to the above. Freedom does not come through mere obedience to law; there must also be the proper spirit manifested in this obedience. The spirit of Christ's obedience was that of deep humility and willing submission to all the laws of His being; and, where this spirit is, there is liberty. Furthermore, the Spirit of the Lord is the enlightening agent in revealing the true laws of life. The Spirit of the Lord was sent to the apostles to make known to them the truth or will of God, which makes men free; and where this Spirit is there is liberty. "Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free." Christian liberty is, therefore, freedom that comes through the knowledge of and obedience to Christian truth, which is revealed by the Spirit of the Lord.

There is, therefore, no liberty to do or not to do the things prescribed by the Spirit of the Lord. Paul was the spokesman of the Spirit on matters pertaining to Christian liberty; but he never granted the liberty to do or not to do what Christ commanded. He insisted on the liberty of doing or not doing what Moses commanded, as, for instance, circumcision and all other requirements of the Jewish law, saying, "For freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage;" but what the Lord Jesus Christ prescribed through the Spirit must be obeyed; and only by obedience thereunto is freedom se-

cured. "His commands are not grievous" but "reasonable," and insure liberty of the highest type. They constitute the essentials of Christian unity, and define the requirements of Christian loyalty, which consists of strict obedience and faithful conformity to what Christ requires. Through such loyalty liberty is gained, and unity is secured, because Christian loyalty requires the same things of all; and the two are thereby connected and harmonized.

Anyone, therefore, that claims any release from the requirements of Christ, as revealed by the Spirit in the Christian Scriptures, does not know the meaning of Christian liberty nor the way to Christian unity. The only release from the Christian Scriptures, "the law of liberty," is by obedience to the same; and only by perfect obedience, if such were possible, can we reach a state "without law, where we are a law unto ourselves." As great a teacher and preacher as Henry Ward Beecher, however, claimed release from the ordinances of Christ. In a sermon on Christian liberty, he said, "I do not believe that any ordinance is authoritative. If I should form a sect, it would be a sect that exercises liberty in the matter of ordinances." Of the Lord's Supper, he says it may be observed or not, just as the worshipper sees fit; and of baptism he says, "It is nothing in and of itself, whether it be immersion or sprinkling." But the Spirit of the Lord, as revealed in the New Testament Scriptures, grants no such liberty; but on the contrary the Spirit says, "A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto Moses; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." Christian

liberty is, therefore, a dangerous privilege, unless it is properly understood and applied. Paul never spoke of it without warning against its abuse. "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh; but through love be servants one to another"; and Peter also says, "As free, not using your freedom as a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God." Both emphasize the fact that it is only through faithful obedience that Christians are free.

While there is no liberty to do or not to do what the Spirit of the Lord requires; yet within these requirements there is the largest freedom, provided there is a real observance of the same. The Spirit prescribes only the broad fundamentals, from which the details of law and conduct are deduced; and with respect to these details there is the broadest liberty that is consistent with these fundamentals. "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Any detail of Christian work and worship that is in harmony with, or does no violence to the fundamental truth through Christ is permissible; and Christian unity does not require uniformity as to these details. A failure to recognize this liberty as to minor details has often disturbed and divided the church; whereas a reasonable, sensible application of this principle of liberty would have preserved unity.

Furthermore, there are many other things, which the Spirit of the Lord permits on the grounds of expediency and indifference, which constitute another legitimate realm of Christian liberty. See Rom. 14 and I Cor. 8-10. Hall L. Calhoun, of Bethany College, has written so Scripturally and clearly of these things that we quote at length from him, as follows:

“All scriptural things are divided into three classes, viz.: *Necessary* things, *expedient* things, and *indifferent* things. Necessary things are things *right, advantageous and commanded*; expedient things are things right and advantageous, but *not commanded*; indifferent things are things right, but *neither advantageous nor commanded*.

#### I. NECESSARY THINGS

In Acts 15:28 the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem said: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” This shows, beyond doubt, that there are some things which the Bible recognizes as necessary. These things must be done. In these things the Bible speaks and we must be silent. The Bible speaks by inspired precept, by inspired example, and by necessary inference from inspired precept or inspired example. In Matt. 18:18 Jesus said to his apostles: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” In Matt. 17:5 God said of Jesus in the presence of Moses, the lawgiver of Israel, and of Elijah, the representative of the prophets: “This is my beloved son; hear ye him.” And in Acts 3:23 Peter quotes the language of Moses referring to Jesus as a prophet and says: “Every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.” These scriptures and others equally as plain make it evident that whenever God ENJOINS anything upon us it MUST BE DONE, and whatever he PROHIBITS MUST NOT BE DONE. If domestic authorities interfere, we must obey God, for Jesus said, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37); and in Luke 14:26 Jesus says: “If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” In John 14:21, 23, Jesus says, “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;” and, “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” If Jesus be the Judge, then, no man loves Jesus who refuses to obey him, no matter who interferes. If civil authorities interfere, we must obey God. Like Daniel of old when the king’s decree conflicted with his duty to God, we must obey God regardless of consequences. (See Dan. 6:1-28.) Jesus says in Matt. 22:21, “Render unto Caesar (the civil authority) the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”

If religious authority interfere, we must obey God. When the highest religious authorities among the Jews had commanded the apostles not to teach in Jesus' name, Peter and the other apostles answered: "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29.) In matters of necessity God speaks and we must always obey him.

## II. INDIFFERENT THINGS

In 1 Cor. 8:8 Paul, speaking of meat, said: "For neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse." A thing the doing of which makes one neither better nor worse must be a matter of indifference. At what particular hour on the Lord's day shall the Lord's Supper be observed? At 11 A. M. or at 8 P. M., or at some other hour? Certainly it may be said of this that the exact hour of the observance of the Lord's Supper is a matter of indifference. If a man eat it at 11 A. M., he is neither better nor worse than if he ate it at any other convenient hour of the Lord's day.

Likewise the position of the BODY in prayer must be a matter of indifference, since men "ought always to pray" and to "pray without ceasing." This, of course, can be done only by prayer being acceptable in all different positions of the body.

Matters of indifference are matters of mere personal privilege, which may or may not be done without sin, so far as the things themselves are concerned.

This class of things is as clearly recognized and defined in the Bible as necessary things are.

Nothing can belong to this class of things which is either enjoined or prohibited in the Scriptures. If it is enjoined in the Scriptures, it is a necessary thing and must be done; if it is prohibited in the Scriptures, it is a sin and it must not be done. Whether one may enjoy his personal liberty in these indifferent things depends upon circumstances.

In 1 Cor. 8:9 Paul says of the eating of the meat: "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." If our doing these indifferent things would lead others who think these things are wrong to do them, then we must refrain. This is clearly taught in 1 Cor. 8:10-13, where Paul says: "For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for

whose sake Christ died. And thus sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble."

If doing these things would GRIEVE or OFFEND others, we must refrain. See Rom. 14:15, 16: "For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of." If others even THINK WE DO WRONG in doing them, we must refrain. In 1 Cor. 10:27-29 this is made plain: "If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it and for conscience sake: conscience I say, not thine own, but the other's."

In things indifferent our brother speaks, and we must ALWAYS yield to him. Rom. 12:10, "In honour preferring one another." Rom. 15:2, "Let each one of us please his neighbor." It is to these things, mere personal privileges, that the law of love applies, and the violation of this law is a sin as certainly as is the violation of any other law that God has given. 1 Cor. 8:12, "And thus sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak ye sin against Christ." And in 1 Cor. 10:33 Paul lays down a rule to govern our conduct in these things, saying, "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many." In necessary things Paul would have pleased God even if he had thereby displeased all men, but in indifferent things he always yielded to others.

### III. EXPEDIENT THINGS

In 1 Cor. 10:23 Paul says: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." When Paul says ALL THINGS are lawful, certainly he does not mean to include sinful things, for "sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4.) He must mean that all right things are lawful, but some right things ARE NOT expedient, clearly implying that there are other right things which are expedient.

Expedient things are things advantageous. Nothing can belong to the class of expedient things which is either necessary or indifferent. If a thing is necessary, it is more than expedient; and if a thing is indifferent, it is less than expedient. All expedient

things are right—*i. e.*, scriptural and advantageous; but they are not commanded—*i. e.*, enjoined or prohibited. In Matt. 18:18 Jesus said: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This passage shows that there are some things bound upon us, and it shows just as clearly that some other things are left loose, and the things left loose are just as right—*i. e.*, scriptural—as the things bound. Paul recognized this principle plainly, for in 1 Cor. 7, speaking in reference to Christians not marrying, he says: "But I speak this by permission and not of commandment." Here was a thing clearly right in and of itself which a man might do or not, just as he thought expedient. This was not a matter of necessity, neither was it a matter of indifference; it was a question of expediency, and the man himself must decide as to its expediency or in expediency in his own case. In this class of things human judgment must always decide whether any particular thing is expedient or not.

What vocation shall a young man choose in life? There is no one vocation enjoined upon any particular person. Each one has to decide this question for himself. Of course he is under obligation to choose a scriptural vocation—that is, one which is right. But just which one the Bible will never tell him. Neither may I nor any other human being say him, nay, when he exercises his right of choice, doing what he thinks is expedient for him.

A thing expedient at one time might be inexpedient or even a sin at another time and under different circumstances—*e. g.*, in 1 Cor. 16:1-7 is an account of the manner in which the churches of Galatia and the church at Corinth were to send their bounty to Jerusalem. This they were to do by the hands of special men approved by them for this purpose. This was doubtless the most expedient way for them at that time and under their circumstances. But when the people of Galveston, Texas, were in need of help a few years ago, if the Christian people of the United States had sent aid to them in the way this aid was sent to Jerusalem, it not only would not have been expedient, it would have been a sin; for some, perhaps many, would have died before the aid could have reached them. To allow our fellow-beings to suffer for the want of this world's goods when we could prevent it is a sin. (1 John 3:17.) And had we left those hungry people to suffer for food till men could go all the way to Galveston and carry personally our bounty we should have been grossly culp-

able. We sent our aid in a different way because it was expedient to do so. We sent through the United States mail and by express and telegram. This was more quickly and economically done because we have better facilities for sending than they had in Paul's day. It is our duty to use these more expedient means just as truly as it is our duty to be baptized. One is the obligation of necessity, and the other is the obligation of expediency, and both these obligations are scripturally binding upon us. In Gal. 6:10 Paul says: "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men." If ten men were to fall into a river and a brother had a way which he believed to be God's way of saving men from drowning and he felt sure that any other way of trying to save them was a sin, and if I knew a way which I believed to be right—*i. e.*, scriptural—and by which I felt sure I could save all ten of the men, while by his way I believed we could save only six of the men, if I used his way and let four men drown whom I believed I could have saved from drowning, I would be morally responsible for the death of those four men. It not only would not be a violation of the law of love for me to use the way which I believed to be most expedient, but it would be my duty to do so, for those four men in the water have claims on me which I must recognize.

In matters of expediency I speak, and no other man may hinder me. The law of love does not and cannot apply in expedient things.

Expedient things must be done, and to fail for any reason to do them is a sin. The obligation of expediency is just as scriptural and binding as the obligation of necessity. Each operates in its own field, and they never conflict."

It is, therefore, evident from the above that we have no liberty as to things necessary except the liberties within these things; and as to things expedient we have no liberty except the liberty of deciding and doing the expedient things; so then things indifferent constitute the only broad realm of Christian liberty, which, though theoretically broad, is practically limited by the welfare of one's brother. While this narrows the fields of Christian liberties more than we desire; yet they are much broader than they first appear, because in addition to the liberties

of things indifferent and expedient there are the many great liberties that come to us through compliance to things necessary, which constitute Christian truth that makes free. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" and, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Christian loyalty requires the same necessary and expedient things of all, and thereby connects and harmonizes liberty and unity; and Christian charity produces unity in things indifferent, so then with this understanding and application of the principles of liberty and unity there need be no conflict between the two, and Christian liberty should be no barrier to Christian unity.

## XVII

### THE OUTLOOK FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

**I**N view of the many difficulties and barriers yet in the way of Christian unity, no one except a blind optimist would say that all is well and propitious for an early realization of the unity for which Christ prayed, and Paul worked; yet there are many justifiable reasons for thinking that all Christian people are slowly but surely coming together. There is much to be said both *pro* and *con* on the outlook of Christian unity. The outlook for anything is determined by things favourable and things unfavourable,—the preponderance of the one over the other; and in the case of Christian unity there is sufficient evidence on both sides to justify the conclusions of both the pessimist and optimist according to the view one is disposed to take. However, in this chapter we hope to take a broad survey of both sides, that the reader may be in a position to draw his own conclusions. To this end we shall consider both the helps and hindrances to Christian unity.

The difficulties and barriers in the way of unity increase and enlarge as we broaden the scope of Christian unity; yet we dare not draw narrower boundaries than Christ Himself, who prayed for the unity of all His disciples. Yet to-day there are so many kinds and shades of disciples of Christ that the task of uniting all of them borders on the impossible. Nevertheless, at the risk and daring of undertaking the impossible, all Christian people need to enlarge their horizon and vision of Christian

unity, until it includes every follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to do as the Prime Minister of England advised his associates in government, "Gentlemen, you must study larger maps." This must be done by all who are working and praying for unity. Nothing short of the unity of the universal church of Christ must be considered in our ultimate plans for Christian unity; and anything short of this is more or less sectarian.

In fact, the sectarian vision and conception of the church, which obtains in the minds of people to-day, is a serious barrier in the way of unity. Sectarian divisions are so old and powerful, and the people are so closely and strongly aligned to the same, that it is difficult to think of the church except in sectarian units; but we must all be brought to see the one universal church of Christ, which is older and more powerful than any or all the denominations. People will never go farther than they can see, so we need to look beyond the sectarian divisions that crowd us in and limit us on all sides to the broad catholic church of Christ that fills and encompasses the earth.

The sectarian viewpoint and vision of the church is only one of the many barriers that sectarianism has put in the way of unity. In fact, all the hindrances have their roots in sectarianism, which must be uprooted before Christian unity can come. Out of sectarian divisions have come our religious differences, which constitute "a wall of partition" between Christians, that must be broken down and removed before unity can come. Through obedience to God and the leadership of Joshua the walls of Jericho were broken down; but far greater and stronger are these walls of partition that divide Christians; however, Paul assures us that "Christ broke them down" between Jews and Gentiles; and He can do the

same for us, if we will all only submit ourselves to His leadership, and thereby bring all together in His world church.

But there remains a greater barrier to unity than our sectarian differences, namely, our sectarian feelings. Religious prejudice has a stronger hold upon people than religious conviction; but Paul teaches that through the power and influence of the cross even this can be removed; and it is a noticeable and accepted fact that bitter religious feelings are softening and crumbling, and giving way to a better feeling among all Christian people, which gives promise of their unity.

Furthermore, established denominationalism, with all its religious organizations, ecclesiastical machinery and church property, is another great hindrance to Christian unity. The Master's question to Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?", is applicable to all denominationalists to-day, and needs to be thrice or more repeated to transfer the affections of the people from the denominations to the church, the one body of Christ. Denominationalism, with all things appertaining, is the price of Christian unity; and many of the denominations having great possessions, like the rich young ruler, are not yet willing to pay the price. Like the early Christians in Jerusalem, all denominations must come together, and have all things in common, in order to have Christian unity.

Denominational pride and devotion cause opposition or indifference to Christian unity, which must be overcome. There are few outspoken opponents of Christian unity to-day, but many that are indifferent to the same. They do not oppose it, but they will do nothing to help it along. They will allow you to unite the religious world, if you can, while they are at ease in their respective de-

nominations. Such an attitude toward Christian unity is a great hindrance, because only those that greatly desire to unite can unite. All must become sufficiently interested to pray and work for unity before it can be brought about.

All the above hindrances, and others besides, grow out of sectarianism in the church, which must be uprooted before we can have Christian unity. Division is still firmly established and deeply entrenched in the church; however, there are many indications on all sides that it is weakening and giving way to a broader and more catholic Christianity, which bespeaks a brighter outlook for Christian unity; and to any one disposed to look upon the bright side of things there are many justifying reasons for optimism on the subject, which we shall now consider.

Turning from the dark side of the outlook for Christian unity to things that favor the same, we mention, first, the righteousness of the cause. It is right from every viewpoint and standard of righteousness; and to all that believe in the final triumph of the right it must surely come; but only by active work in behalf of this cause on the part of all believers can we hasten this glad day.

Furthermore, there is to-day a very broad, if not a universal, desire for Christian unity, which is very encouraging and helpful. Only those that desire to unite can unite; and this desire must be sufficiently strong to overcome many difficulties in the way. There are few apologists to-day for division, while on the other hand there are many eloquent tongues and pens in every communion pleading for unity; and the desire for the same is spreading and growing rapidly, which is a promising hope for Christian unity.

But the greatest help and surest hope of unity is Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which we have shown to be a complete solution of the tangled problem. Without a voice of reason and authority to lead us out of the confusion and wilderness of division we will wander on in our separate ways toward the promised land and the city of our God,—possibly to land in a religious Babylon; but Paul, through this letter, has opened up the way out of division into the unity of the “one body, the church of Christ,” so all who will may know the way out, and come to “the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” The author of this book has striven in his study of this letter to make this way known; and, if any comment upon the same has tended to obscure this way, or has been beside the mark, let that be forgotten; and let the reader place his own interpretation upon what Paul has written in this letter on Christian unity, and with any rational interpretation of Paul's teaching the result will be the same, namely, the unity of the church.

However, Paul's teaching on the subject of unity can not unite the church, unless it is accepted and followed, and there is an earnest effort on the part of the divided church to realize this unity. Such an effort is being made to-day in almost every church, which is a hopeful sign of ultimate unity. It is true that we are working at the problem from many different viewpoints and ways that seem at times to lead us apart instead of together; but it is encouraging to know that we are all aiming at the same end, the unity of the church. There are yet many “valleys to be exalted, mountains and hills to be made low, the uneven and rough places to be made plane,” before the highway to Christian unity is prepared, “when the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed;” but it is very heartening to know that many strong men in every com-

munion are working at these tasks. Never before in the history of the church has there been a greater and more earnest effort to find and prepare the way to unity. Almost every communion has some kind of an organization looking toward unity, such as the Episcopalian Conference On Faith and Order, the Presbyterian Council On Organic Union, the Christian Association For The Promotion Of Christian Unity, etc.; and there also are many interdenominational organizations at work for Christian unity, as follows: Association For The Promotion Of The Unity Of Christendom; Christian Unity Association Of Scotland; Christian Unity Foundation; Churchman's Union; Commission On The World Conference On Faith And Order; Council On Organic Union; Federal Council Of The Churches Of Christ In America; Free Church Fellowship; Universal Conference Of The Church Of Christ On Life And Work; National Council Of The Evangelical Free Churches Of England; etc.

Another advanced step toward unity is conference instead of controversy. Conferences are succeeding controversies as a means of unity. Controversy has been tried out in the past, and it has been found to propagate division rather than to promote unity. But to-day Christian people are coming together to confer more than to discuss, to harmonize and not to antagonize. We have found out that we can not argue people into unity; but we can come together on the common plain of Christian brotherhood, and confer with each other on the subject, which is a better way to secure unity. The recent World Conference On Faith And Order at Geneva, Switzerland, is an example of such a conference; and many more are to follow.

Furthermore, in these conferences there is more religious tolerance and less sectarian dogmatism than in the

discussions of the past. On all unsettled questions, such as the Priesthood, the ordinances and the government of the church, there is more liberality manifested to-day than yesterday. We are more willing to consider the position and viewpoint of the other man and to concede truth wherever found. This does not mean a weakening of convictions, but the opening of the doors for an exchange of views and the adjustment of our differences. In our separate pursuit of truth we will never come together. Truth must be sought corporately and collectively to arrive at any unity of faith and knowledge; and we must be willing always to concede the sincerity and truth of the other man, which is essential to all amicable fellowship. This makes it possible to discover our own errors, which are the most difficult of all to remove. The closer we come together and the more immediate the contact the better we understand each other, and the nearer we are drawn together. Whenever we are brought close together, the religious atmosphere clears; but, when we stand far apart, each appears to be wrapped in a cloud of error like travelers in foggy weather. What we need, therefore, is a closer touch and a more immediate contact with each other in our efforts to bring about Christian unity.

All things considered, both *pro* and *con*, the outlook for Christian unity is brighter to-day than yesterday; yet there remains much to be done to reunite the church. As a practical way of brightening the outlook and hastening the consummation of Christian unity, the following is quoted from Dr. Peter Ainslie, President of the Association For The Promotion of Christian Unity, and heartily commended to the reader:

“ There are seven things which every Christian can,

do and ought to do to brighten the outlook for Christian unity and hasten its consummation. These are:

(1) *Praying*, earnest praying in public and in private, remembering that in the high-priestly prayer of Jesus He says, "Holy Father \* \* \* I pray \* \* \* that they may all be one."

(2) *Thinking*, definite thinking in terms of the brotherhood of all Christians, remembering that Jesus says, "One is your teacher, and all ye are brethren."

(3) *Speaking*, kindly speaking of those Christians in other communions than your own with a real interest in their welfare, remembering that the Apostle Paul says, "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others."

(4) *Conferring*, frankly conferring with those of other communions whenever it is possible, always in the spirit of courteous friendship, and avoiding the dangers attending controversial methods, which belong under the admonition of the Apostle Paul, when he says, "Shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned."

(5) *Teaching*, patiently teaching the principles of Christian brotherhood and the unity of the church \* \* \*, wherever there is the opportunity \* \* \*, remembering that Christ says, "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

(6) *Working*, heartily working together, especially those communions of nearest kinship, entering into definite negotiations toward their formal *rapproche-*

*ment* and ultimate union, remembering that the Apostle says, "We are God's fellow-workers; ye are God's husbandry, God's building."

(7) *Believing*, sincerely believing that the prayer and purpose of Jesus will find their fulfillment in a united Christendom and indeed they are being fulfilled now, remembering that Jesus says, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

With the whole church thus aroused and at work for Christian unity, it will surely come. If the signs of Christian unity on the religious horizon of the future are to be believed, the unity for which Christ prayed and Paul worked is slowly but surely coming. This is not a passing dream of the dark, closing night, but a sure promise of the red opening dawn, "when the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed" in the reunited church of His dear Son, and all shall work and worship God together in the beauty of holiness. To help and hasten this glad day this book is written and sent forth on its mission of unity, with prayers for the unity of the whole Church of Christ.







